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# GEORGE V

JONATHAN CAPE AND HARRISON SMITH,  
139 EAST 46TH STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y., AND  
77 WELLINGTON STREET, W., TORONTO, CANADA.  
JONATHAN CAPE, LTD., 30 BEDFORD SQUARE,  
LONDON, W. C. I.







*Costumes at Cowes, with a grace of their own. King George, then Duke of York, stands in the center. To the right of him is his mother, Alexandra, then the Princess of Wales, and to the left Princess Louise. Princess Victoria kneels beside her mother, and Princess Maud, now Queen of Norway, sits cross-legged on the floor, holding her regatta mascot.*



# GEORGE V

BY  
SIR GEORGE ARTHUR



NEW YORK  
JONATHAN CAPE AND HARRISON SMITH

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GEORGE V





## CHAPTER I

### BIRTH AND EDUCATION

THE evening of June 2nd, 1865, was marked in London by one of the larger, and more important, dinner-parties which the Prince and Princess of Wales delighted to give at Marlborough House. At the last moment the Royal host was constrained to do the honours alone as the Princess was fatigued after 'being present at a long "Hallé" concert, but their Graces of Wellington and Sutherland, the Duke of St. Albans, the Danish Minister, Lord and Lady Derby contributed to form a goodly company; Lady Palmerston brought the excuses of her Lord, whose days were already numbered, although on that Friday he had sat for some hours in Cabinet; Gladiateur had just carried off the Derby Stakes to France, and to his exultant owner, Count Lagrange, a special invitation had been sent. The Band of the Scots Guards played a "Selection", the occasion was gay—as such occasions were wont to be—with talk and laughter, and midnight was approaching before a gracious gesture enabled the guests to make their farewell obeisance.

Then on every breakfast table the next morning was the official news that Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales had been safely delivered of a son at 1.18 a.m. and that both the Princess and infant were perfectly well. The *Times*

newspaper cautiously remarked that the event, though not actually unexpected, was not preceded by any prolonged anxiety; Queen Victoria, with more precision, wrote to the King of the Belgians that, whereas the elder brother had made his appearance two months before he was expected,<sup>1</sup> "Alix was again confined too soon, but this time only a month, and the child is said to be nice and plump and much larger than Albert Victor".

The question as to how the Royal Baby should be called was discussed with eagerness and some little warmth. The Queen did not smile on the idea of another "George"; the advent of the Georges, she reminded her son, was only contemporary with the accession of the House of Hanover, and the last monarch to bear the name had been so very unsatisfactory; no Tudor or Stuart "George" could be cited. To counter these arguments it was submitted that "George" had a real English ring about it; the Patron Saint was aptly quoted—although the Sovereign's interest in hagiology was insufficient for this to be very effective; and there was urged the desire to do honour to the Duke of Cambridge, who, if only "Uncle George" *à la mode de Bretagne*, was so familiar and beloved a figure. Eventually the wishes of the parents were acceded to, but word came from Balmoral: "Of course you will add 'Albert' at the end, like your brothers, as you know we settled long ago that all dearest Papa's male descendants should bear that name". However sharp the difference of opinion as to the first name a future King of England should bear, there was mutual agreement as to

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Peel accepted an invitation to dine with Queen Victoria for the night on which her eldest son was born.

Frederick and Ernest; Prince Frederick of Denmark was to be a sponsor, as well as the Queen of Denmark herself, and Prince Ernest of Leiningen, an intimate friend, was to be another. "Ernest", too, was likely to be the more favoured by the Sovereign, as being the name of the reigning Duke of Coburg. True, there had been a little trouble in that quarter lately; Duke Ernest's conduct in identifying himself with the Duke of Augustenburg's cause in the struggle for Schleswig-Holstein had been denounced by his sister-in-law as "rash and precipitate", but Duke Ernest was head of her husband's House and it was well his name should be perpetuated. Eventually, and after the little Prince had been described by his grandmother as "not very pretty", the *Court Circular* could announce, on July 8th, that the infant Prince had been christened in the name of George Frederick Ernest Albert, a communiqué which excited a Church newspaper to remark with some acidity that "Christian infants were usually baptised in the name of the Trinity".

The rite of baptism in the Private Chapel at Windsor claimed considerable ceremonial. "Frock dress"—in other words knee breeches and silk stockings—or "Windsor uniform", a creation of Prince Albert, was prescribed; the members of the Royal Family mustered in force, Her Majesty's Household with "special invited guests" were present, and the Danish, Saxon, and Hanoverian Ministers represented their Kings, the last in happy ignorance that a year later the Kingdom of Hanover would be overpast. The Archbishop of Canterbury received the infant Prince—who, if carried by his nurse, was already "attended by" the



Countess of Macclesfield, from the hands of the Sovereign, and a combined choir drawn from Her Majesty's Private Chapel and St. George's Chapel "rendered" effectively, if a trifle inappropriately, a chorale composed by the Prince Consort which ran:

In life's gay morn, ere sprightly youth  
By vice and folly is enslaved.

The childhood of the two brothers was of the sunniest and simplest; a fond father, an adoring mother, and a trio of admiring baby sisters did nothing to spoil boyish characters as frank as they were joyous. The Princess of Wales, if she could have followed her will, would never have had her children "out of the way". For her there would be no "children's hour"—all hours were theirs; the little hands never tumbled her skirts or ruffled her hair, childish chatter never wearied or disturbed her. In her presence the children would always "behave", not from any compulsion to do so but because there was so little temptation to do otherwise. Nor was the father any less addicted to the society of his children, and even when conducting his correspondence a youthful interruptor, however vociferous, would only meet with the mildest rebuke.

From the first there was a tendency on the part of the younger brother to dominate—and, unless checked, take precedence of—the elder, whose delicate beauty was of a piece with a rather dreamy outlook, and perhaps for this reason the parents, no less wise because wholly devoted to

their children decided that feminine surveillance <sup>1</sup> must give way to masculine tuition when the boys were but six and seven years old. The choice of a tutor—who was later to develop into a Governor—was made with infinite care and painstaking, and after some hesitation and earnest consultation with expert authority, the post was offered to a Cambridge scholar who six years earlier had scored first-class theological honours.

“‘How would Your Majesty have your sons treated?’ ‘Like the sons of any private gentleman; let them be flogged if they deserve it’—and flogged they were, but a change of preceptors having occurred when they were in their teens, the brothers decided that corporal punishment would be an indignity; and on the first appearance of a new tutor with an implement of correction, they rushed upon him, wrenched the weapon from him and exercised it vigorously on the reverend gentleman’s own anatomy.” So wrote good Dr. Markham, afterwards Archbishop of York, as to the sons of George III. No such experience awaited Mr. Dalton or his pupils; but over those pupils, by sheer force of character and honest desire for their good, he gained an influence which time was not to diminish nor circumstance vary.

John Neale Dalton—in whose veins flowed the blood of the eminent Tractarian—could boast of a University career little short of brilliant, but he seems to have been quick to

<sup>1</sup>Lady Lyttelton, who was governess to Queen Victoria’s elder children, declared that when the Prince of Wales was taken from her mild sway and placed under tutors and governors he used to murmur when he passed his sisters’ schoolroom, “Oh, those happy days.”

recognise that, in the case of his young charges, education, rather than mere instruction, was a matter of cardinal importance; in other words he was sure that if he could show his pupils, who had no outstanding aptitude for assimilating knowledge, *how* to learn, the *what* to learn would follow as surely as day follows night. There was apparently every effort to teach, there was never any disposition to cram; "Mr. Dalton," Queen Victoria could rightly remark, "has the children's interests most closely at heart." Of Lady Beaconsfield, Lord Beaconsfield said: "She is excellent in every way, but she never can remember which came first, the Greeks or the Romans." A wise teacher knew well that dry-as-dust knowledge would be of little practical value to the future heir to the throne and his brother; what mattered was that they should be "excellent in every way," and with that intent he set himself to stimulate the considerable mental alertness which he found to his hand so that in the future which lay before them his pupils could cultivate their own faculties to the required concert pitch. Books were, of course, not the only paths to knowledge; historical sites and monuments were visited and explained, galleries and museums were carefully inspected. The Tower of London and Nelson's statue could never flag in interest; Westminster Abbey, on the other hand, would rather suggest the lesson-book. "What an ugly old woman!" was the curt comment with which Prince George dismissed the statue of the Virgin Queen.

With her comprehensive grasp on everything that in any way concerned her, Queen Victoria seems to have insisted that the physical and moral progress of her grandsons



*A photograph of little Prince George, when the camera frightened him into a rare, tearful mood.*





should be reported to her with the same detail as to their parents. "The Princes are both"—so in 1874 the preceptor writes to the Sovereign in a letter which savours a little of Mr. Barlow—"in the enjoyment of the most thorough good health and spirits, and daily prosecute their studies with due diligence and attention. They are living," so the narrative continues, "a very regular and quiet life in the country at Sandringham, and keeping early hours, both as to rising in the morning and retiring to rest at night; they ride on ponies an hour each alternate morning, and take a walk the other three days in the week; in the afternoon they take exercise on foot, while as regards their studies, writing, reading and arithmetic are all progressing favourably; music, spelling, English history, Latin, geography and French, all occupy a due share of Their Royal Highnesses' attention, progress in English history and geography being very marked." The curriculum was sufficiently comprehensive, and alternate work and play was the régime insisted on; distractions in the shape of children's parties and other entertainments were sparsely allowed. "As a great treat to celebrate the birthday of my eldest little girl, we are taking four of the children to the Circus"; so writes the Prince of Wales to Lord Granville in 1873 in excuse for leaving the House of Lords during a speech of special interest on foreign decorations for English subjects. In 1874 an even greater treat was allowed, in the appearance of two beautifully dressed pages in attendance on their mother—herself garbed as Marie Stuart and easily the most beautiful figure in the room—at a costume ball given at Marlborough House; while on another occasion it was proposed that the Princes should follow

Queen Victoria to the throne in the House of Lords at the opening of Parliament.

Not only was Mr. Dalton instructed to keep in direct touch with the Queen—a procedure which throws light on the infinite tact and forbearance of the parents—but in 1877 the Sovereign drafted a memorandum expounding her views as to the later training of her grandsons. If the document in question ran along the lines laid down for the bringing up of her own eldest son, there may well have been rejoicing in youthful minds that the prescription, even if it saw the light of day, never became operative. As a matter of fact the Prince of Wales had decided what course to pursue, and from that determination nothing would shake him. Early in 1877 he explained to the Queen that, however strict a domestic régime might be, for the right education, proper discipline and undisturbed studies of his sons, they must, he felt, leave home. He remembered his own rather joyless boyhood, with the fitful companionship of two or three carefully selected contemporaries, and he was quite clear that his own boys should have no such dreary experience: they were to be entered as naval cadets on the *Britannia* training ship at Dartmouth. The Queen demurred: the rough-and-tumble of a training-ship, the inability to pick and choose the comrades who would “chum” with her grandsons, the possibility of their forming acquaintances which it might be undesirable to retain in the future—all these and other considerations seemed to forbid a scheme the originality of which had no attraction for her. The Sovereign suggested, as a compromise, Wellington College where, anyhow, a more constant eye could be kept on the Princes;

Eton and Harrow were, for some reason, out of the question, and were to remain out of the question for scions of the Royal House until thirteen years later when the Duke and Duchess of Teck laughed at precedent and lodged their third son at the school which stands first on England's list. With every wish to propitiate the Queen, the Prince of Wales would only go so far as to say that the step he proposed to take was experimental; that Mr. Dalton would remain in charge, and that of course the elder boy would not enter the navy while the younger would only do so if he really wished it. The Queen was still scarcely satisfied, but an interview with Mr. Dalton did much to smooth things out. He read the memorandum through, and his remarks on it caused the Sovereign to be "thankful to see what a fearless, honest man he is." The tutor diplomatically remarked that all the points mentioned in the paper had been considered, but that after taking counsel with men "of sound and reliable views", he was convinced that the *Britannia* plan was the right one.

Early in May the brothers were subjected to a two days' examination, identical with that for every other candidate for a naval cadetship; the official report noted that, whereas the answers were generally satisfactory, the young Princes exhibited in some of the subjects a more than usual degree of proficiency. The die was cast, and a happy era of sport and study in eager competition and joyous companionship now set in; fraternal relations were to be in not whit relaxed, but delightful new friendships—some evanescent, some lasting—were sure to be formed. Among the latter, Prince



George was quick to find himself in boyish sympathy with a cadet<sup>1</sup> who, forty years later, was to support Marshal Foch in dictating to Germany's sullen delegates the terms on which an armistice would be granted.

The Prince of Wales saw for himself that all was well: his visits to the *Britannia* were not infrequent, and after the first summer holidays he journeyed himself from Scotland to take his now fast-growing boys on board the training-ship; he was strong, moreover, in the next year to resist a reiterated request of the Queen that special leave should be granted in order that the cadets might be with her on her birthday at Balmoral. Mr. Dalton, about to be promoted from tutor to governor, had been anxious that this indulgence should not be accorded, but was careful to write from Dartmouth to Balmoral: "It is impossible that two lads could be in more robust health or happier than the two Princes are. Their studies also progress favourably, but there is no fear of the elder Prince working too hard or overtaxing his powers, as Your Majesty seems to fear. They both sleep well and take their outdoor exercise regularly. Both often think and talk of home, and there is no fear of their home affections being weakened by their residence here."

The *Britannia*, however, was only to be the stepping-stone to a much larger training-ground. The Prince of Wales was the reverse of cramped in his outlook, and his heart was set on his sons having advantages and means of acquiring knowledge denied to himself. The British Empire under his august mother's powerful and beneficent sceptre

<sup>1</sup> Rosslyn Wemyss, afterwards Lord Wester Wemyss.



*During his holidays, Prince George enjoyed the free spaces about Balmoral, and the advice of his awe-inspiring grandmother.*



was expanding with every year, and over that Empire a son of his would sooner or later be called to rule; the colonies—which not so long ago Mr. Disraeli had sought to belittle—were assuming proportions and suggesting relations of first-rate importance. Could there be any better apprenticeship for responsible work which lay ahead than to gain an insight into Great Britain's vast reservoirs of wealth and manhood overseas?

## CHAPTER II

### THE VOYAGE OF THE "BACCHANTE"

IN May 1879, the Prince of Wales, having first repaired to Windsor to secure his mother's sanction, confided to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. W. H. Smith—popularly nicknamed "Old Morality"—his project of sending his sons to girdle the world in Her Majesty's ship *Bacchante*, with a first and shorter cruise to the West Indies. The First Lord was, as usual, wholly amiable, but on this occasion not wholly discreet: he made what was purely a matter for the Queen's decision a subject for Cabinet discussion, and the Prime Minister, presuming on the latitude generally allowed him, penned a hasty expostulation. "The Cabinet", he wrote to the Queen, "is strongly of opinion that the departure of the two young Princes on the same ship would greatly disquiet the public mind, and"—(here the politician got the better of the courtier)—"if anything happened to them, your Majesty's Government would justly be called to account." But for once Lord Beaconsfield missed his mark; the Queen had already talked the thing over with Mr. Dalton, who warmly championed the new adventure, and Lord Beaconsfield was to smart under a sharp rebuke. "I entirely approve the plan," the Queen telegraphed, "which ought never to have been brought before the Cabinet. The Prince



of Wales only mentioned it to Mr. Smith, and was, with right, extremely annoyed at his doing so. Such a thing was never done when the Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred went on long journeys and voyages."

The status which the youthful travellers were to claim when visits to foreign rulers were necessary led to a triangular correspondence between the Queen, the Prince of Wales, and Lord Granville, as Foreign Minister. The Queen thought that official hospitalities and receptions might turn the boys' heads; and Lord Clanwilliam, the Admiral, acting under instructions, when signals came on board the flagship asking if such-and-such an official might wait upon Prince Albert Victor and Prince George on the *Bacchante*, would signal back that the young gentlemen in question were midshipmen and could not receive official visits. The Prince of Wales, however, while equally anxious that no whit of discipline should be relaxed, no item of routine altered, did not think his sons should be treated, on land, with less honours than had recently been tendered to his nephew Prince Henry of Prussia and to the Duke of Genoa—the King of Italy's first cousin—during their tours of the world. The Japanese Government, for instance, determined to show that their country knew something of Western civilisation, drew up an elaborate programme of entertainment, which the Prince approved but which the Queen would have torn up. But for once the Prince had his way, and the Mikado, on the 24th October 1881, received the Princes, who had arrived at Tokio the preceding day, with some state. On a minor matter, however, the Queen prevailed; the Prince would have liked his sons to hand an Order to the Japanese

potentate; the Sovereign objected, and a compromise was eventually reached in the presentation of a portrait of herself. By letter, telegram and messenger, she urged Lord Granville to despatch a picture to Tokio in good time; but for some reason his representations were neglected, and the Princes could only assure the Mikado that their grandmother's portrait was on the way. Nor was their stay in Egypt to occur without protest and counter-protest. "I have been four times in Egypt <sup>1</sup> in the last twenty years, and have always stayed at a palace, knowing how impossible it was to refuse; and all members of the Royal Family have done the same. I think, therefore, the Khedive would be offended if his offer on this occasion should be refused." So wrote the Prince of Wales to the Queen on February 17, 1882, in response to her unwillingness that the Princes should accept the offer of the Khedive's Palace during their stay at Cairo. Sir Edward Malet, the English representative in Egypt, thought that the visit itself might be inopportune, as there were threats of internal disturbance and Arabi was already making himself objectionable; but in the end the boys were to receive from the Khedive Tewfik—when finally homeward-bound in March 1882—the same lavish and costly hospitality as his father, Khedive Ismail, had offered to their father some fourteen years earlier.

The period of the tour, which began on September 17, 1879, was to some extent a very definite one in the history of naval development or rather, since there is no such thing as a definite point in progress, a period of absorbing interest to the youth who, thirty-five years later, was to be King of

<sup>1</sup> King Edward VII (Sidney Lee).



*A dreamy-eyed youth, in cadet's uniform, who was one day  
to be crowned King of England.*



a vast modern navy at war. The *Bacchante* herself was an epitome of old and new. In her armament were included a muzzle-loading broadside and Whitehead torpedo tubes. She could, furthermore, bowl along at a stately six knots—and frequently more—under sail, or dip screw into water in a more up-to-date fashion, and, while at Portland, was to greet H.M.S. *Newcastle*, the last of the old frigates and one of the Flying Squadron.

As cadets of the *Bacchante*, the Princes were under daily instruction of a very definite, not to say drastic, nature, which opened with midshipmen's drill at 6.15 A.M. Not the least of their duties was the keeping of a daily log, and it was from these logs and from home correspondence that rose in 1886 two monumental tomes, in which who runs may read—and even now read with benefit—the story of an Odyssey which is in many respects of permanent interest.

From these volumes the Princes emerge with all the wholesome attributes of youth, with all the wondering delight of the young abroad for the first time, with all the normal love of fun. But while there is much talk of sports and single-stick and tug-of-war and of "high cockalorum" in the evenings, their educational attainments suggest themselves as considerable, or would anyhow seem so to the public-school boy of their age. Sober are the thoughts as they sail over the sea of Trafalgar's fight; meteorological observations are duly recorded; paintings and sculpture are seen, to be appreciated and criticised; quotations from the poets, and even from the Latin version of the Psalms, are strewn up and down the pages; references to remote and obscure history are not absent—and although these last were



perhaps culled from the local guide-books freely served out, there is much to indicate an erudition which is a little startling to contemplate.

On the *Bacchante*, as on the *Britannia*, Prince George was to find a close and constant friend. Charles Cust, sprung from sturdy Shropshire stock, had succeeded to his father's baronetcy and estate while a child, but the salt of the sea was in his nostrils, and from the sea nothing would detain him. By one of those happy so-called accidents which serve to shape so many lives, the good ship *Bacchante* was hardly under way before there was created a comradeship, to ripen into a friendship which change of station and circumstance was powerless to vary. For the claim of friendship and of what was nothing less than obvious duty was later to be stronger even than professional zeal; Cust was to find in his boyhood's friend his manhood's master, and in fifty years' service there was to be no weakening of the old bond which had been so quickly forged. A master's choice could have fallen on no better man. Charles Cust was to travel widely and read more widely still, and to bring to the task he gladly undertook a store of knowledge and varied experience; the faculty for admiration was to be the pendant to an equally keen faculty for criticism; never have exquisite courtesy and perfect candour been more closely knitted, and perhaps no character has ever better suggested how essential is the sprig of sorrel to the *bonne femme* soup.

Leaving home waters, the *Bacchante* first cruised the western Mediterranean. Princely hearts must have beat high as they saw towering above them the Rock which had been finely won and finely held by British arms, both naval and

military. Twice landings were made on Gibraltar, and visits were also paid to the Balearic Isles and Sicily, before proceeding westwards to the Canaries. The history of the latter group was evidently well read up, and a note is made of the friendly reception of the old French and Spanish adventurers at the hands of the natives, with the naïve comment, "friendly as nearly all natives seem ever to be when *first* they come into contact with Europeans."

There was something solemn in the departure of the man-o'-war from Teneriffe to the Golden West, some deep feeling registered and faithfully recorded by the boys themselves. "So bade", they write, "good-bye to Teneriffe and the Old World, and started on the track of Columbus for the New, following almost in his very footsteps." To them it was just as much of an adventure, although they found that the lonely path of the adventurer was now "a regular high road". They are, however, just now far too much occupied with the half-yearly exam. for midshipmen to spend over-much time in moralising.

Every British possession in the West Indies they saw, from Barbadoes, "almost the only one of the West Indies which has never changed hands", to Bermuda. Every day the eyes of a future King-Emperor were being opened to the glories of the realms over which he never thought to rule; every day he was reading in the great open book of the World and—in his own quiet fashion—storing up priceless information gained at first-hand.

The Princes studied conditions—both social and labour—acquainted themselves with industries and specially noted the way in which every tiny island was governed and was

linked to the home island. Their own observations are the reverse of shallow—perhaps because their minds were specially receptive—while here and there acute youth asserts itself in a trite remark, as when, discussing the history of Barbadoes, one of them writes: "The colonies paid them, at any rate."

It was at Barbadoes that an old coloured lady flung into the carriage a spade guinea of George III., "which", says Prince Albert Victor, "George has worn on his watch-chain ever since." Officer-like, they are quick to study the circumstances of a station from the point of view of the men of their own service, and partly as a result of their visit a "Home" for service men was established in Barbadoes, which was to be generously supported by a Prince of Wales whose benevolence was always easy to enlist.

The technical language, which is used with evident relish, may do something to baffle the landsman who tries to follow the enthusiastic scribes when they "rove screw purchase, and down screw and then tried to tack, but missed stays and so wore ship".

Just now came the delightful moment when the cadets were rated midshipmen; in future they refer proudly to the doings of "we mids". Princely dignity and boyish delight must have warred mightily now and again, as when Prince George, having given a piece of cake to a naked nigger urchin, was rewarded by the delighted father letting off salvoes of crackers at his Royal feet.

Even in the Indies, where whole populations of many races and at least two colours (not counting shades) thronged to do them honour, an incognito is contrived;



*During his sea-faring boyhood, King George was instructed in all the tricks of the sailor's trade. He is here shown with his elder brother, the Duke of Clarence, learning to splice a rope.*





they meet "two or three Roman Catholic priests, and in course of conversation learned their ideas, without their knowing who we were, of things in general". So hectic were the island nights' entertainments offered in their honour that they "long now for a little quiet at sea".

The long voyages and wide travels of the Prince of Wales of to-day must recall vividly to a King whose memory is seldom at fault his own youthful adventures in far parts of the Empire. There was the same fervid loyalty shown, the same showering of gifts, weird, useful or bizarre, with the same warm hearts to prompt the givers. No doubt all that King Edward's younger son so beneficially derived from mixing with the inhabitants of the far-flung outposts of Empire did much to influence his conception of the future tours of his son; he, too, must presently ascend the throne of Empire, knowing at first-hand the complexities of peoples over whom destiny is to give him sway.

The beginning of May 1880 saw the *Bacchante* in home waters, with the Prince of Wales ready to meet her at Spithead. For many days the chief interest of officers and men in approaching the homeland had been to know the results of the recent elections. Politics are not supposed to colour the conversations of Princes, but the Princes on board the *Bacchante* knew what the distress would be at Windsor were the Tory Prime Minister to be driven from office. The first two British ships to be met were spoken to, without result; but later on they encountered a barque recently out from the Lizard, and sailing close, they raised a board with the question: "Who is the Premier?" The captain of the merchantman, thinking they wished for the name of his ship,

shouted "*Fauchon*," which was interpreted aboard the *Bacchante* as "Gladstone." To their next question: "What is his majority?" the worthy soul replied: "Non entiendo"—signifying "I do not understand," but taken for "One hundred" by the news-seekers!

Start Light was sighted on May 2, and on the following day two excited, healthy young middies were welcomed from their first cruise in foreign waters by a father obviously no less excited, and by the general rejoicings of the Spithead shipping.

There followed a cruise with the combined Channel and Reserve Squadrons. The Reserve Squadron was composed of obsolete ships manned by coastguards performing their biennial training, and both squadrons meet with rough criticism at the pens of youthful enquirers after knowledge. They see clearly through the pomp and majesty of the great fleet: while such an assembly, they declare, has its uses as a means of impressing the general public and strengthening the Government at election times, it is likely, by reason of the obsolescence of some of its ships and the out-of-date armament and manœuvre, to appear very small beer in the face of determined opposition by, for instance, the greatly improved French fleet of that time. The descriptions of naval exercises of the day are fascinating even to the mere land-lubber. Although all the ironclads were, of course, equipped for sailing under steam, they still carried full complements of sails and were forced by order to use them on every possible occasion. Apart from actual use as a means of progres-

sion, every ship in the fleet, weather permitting, performed the very complicated sail drills that had served to make the navy of Nelson's day so speedy, but which can hardly have been necessary at the close of the last century.

### CHAPTER III

## THE RETURN HOME

THE Princes were not to be detained at home for more than a long summer holiday, and on September 20, 1880, commenced the second and more considerable of the two *Bacchante* cruises. The small fleet, commanded by Rear-Admiral the Earl of Clanwilliam, consisted of the flagship *Inconstant*, *Tourmaline*, *Carysfort*, *Cleopatra* and *Bacchante*, to which was added for a time the *Garnet*.

A quotation from Ruskin, made during the journey to Vigo, goes to show that the sea calling had gripped the young adventurers in its own glamour. "Take it all in all, a ship of the line is the most honourable thing that man, as a gregarious animal, has ever produced." Their own thought is added: "Certainly the sight of England's oaken and iron walls combined, tearing through the black water, fills one with a strength and joy such as nothing else can give."

Another visit to the Canaries and the tiny fleet set sail for South America, crossing the Line *en route* with all the accustomed frivolities.

It was after leaving South America and while on a visit to the Falklands that the fleet received sudden orders to proceed for South Africa under service conditions. The prospect of active service is always intensely alluring to those

without experience of its horrors, and not the least excited of the sailors were the Royal midshipmen. There was no idea on board that they were sailing to the first Boer War, but the prevalent idea seems to have been that troubles were thickening in South Africa, and that the navy might be called on to give a hand. During the voyage, arms and accoutrements not in common use in the sea service, but necessary for landing parties, were issued out, special drills were held, so that on reaching Table Bay the ships' companies might be ready and fit for anything.

The Queen was now again to impose her will: the question had arisen as to whether the young Princes might be attached to a Naval Brigade, in which case they would be more than likely to see a blow struck in anger. The Prince of Wales, to whom fear of danger was a thing entirely unknown, was indisposed to exercise any veto, but the Sovereign was emphatic in refusal. Not only, she argued, would her grandsons be exposed to unnecessary but—what was even worse—to undignified risks. The independence of the Boers was not to be proclaimed till after the bitter story of Majuba Hill, and the Transvaal patriots were, in the Queen's view, not antagonists but rebels in arms. Mr. Gladstone was now in office, and Mr. Gladstone was a little apt to take action first and sanction afterwards; it might be well to remind his Government that such a course must not be pursued. To Lord Northbrook, as First Lord of the Admiralty, the Queen wrote: "The Queen is glad to hear that the Princes are not to be attached to a Naval Brigade. They are so young (17½ and 16), and the only *two* sons of the Prince of Wales—the eldest, moreover, not regularly in the



navy (and the orders given for him were different, as Lord Northbrook will recollect, to those for his younger brother) —so that to expose their lives needlessly, and moreover in a *civil* war, would have been *wrong* in every way. Lord Northbrook will recollect that, while George *was* to go in command of boats and aloft, Albert Victor was not to do so. That, in fact, Lord Northbrook and many others were for many reasons at first *not* in favour of the eldest boy's going again to sea, and that it was only for his education and his character that it was consented to, now and on their former cruise." The sting of the allocution lay in its tail: "The Queen trusts that in future Lord Northbrook will not give any fresh orders without letting the Queen first know, so that the disagreement of opinion may not arise."

And in curious disregard of the fact that a devoted mother must have been no less anxious than herself as to the safety and welfare of boys who were all in all to her, the Queen writes to the Princess of Wales in prose which runs along her own special level:

DARLING ALIX,

I am very sorry Bertie should have been sore about the boys; but I think he must have forgotten the *arrangements* and *conditions* and *instructions* respecting their going to sea. I, and even Bertie and you, only consented to their *both* going to sea for their *education* and *moral training*. This being the case—the *Bacchante* going to the Cape, which was done in a hurry without one consultation with me (I *disapproved*)—and feeling how valuable these two *young* lives are to the *whole nation*, I felt *bound* to protect them against useless and unnecessary exposure in a

cruel *Civil War*—for so it is, the Boers being my subjects, and it being a rule that Princes of the Royal Family *ought not* to be mixed in it. In any other war, should in time there be one (when Georgie be older) and his ship be *obliged necessarily* to take part in it, I would quite agree with Bertie. Pray show this to him, as I am sure he and every one would agree in this being the *right course*.

If atavism counts for anything, it is well to remember that, whatever shortcomings or delinquencies can be charged to it in history, the House of Hanover can always claim as one of its fine attributes that physical courage as regards self which engenders the desire to give, and take, hard knocks when a good cause is at stake. A year later, twice did Albert Edward Prince of Wales use every means at his disposal to secure consent to proceed to the miniature theatre of war in Egypt; twice was that consent refused, and it was only after much hesitation and many tears that permission was wrung from a Sovereign—always fearless as regards her own safety—for the Duke of Connaught to lead the Brigade of Guards in the campaign against Arabi. The disappointment of two gallant boys, eager to smell powder and snatch an experience which might hereafter be denied to them, may well have been mordant.

The unwillingness to allow the prospective Heir to the Throne to take part in the ups and downs of war irresistibly induces a mental picture—which could have been drawn thirty-five years later—of a very young man, wholly unconcerned with his high position, riding on a very cranky army bicycle along the *pavé* of a French high road which

had received its daily ration of Boche hate, and anathematising fluently and audibly the bumpy nature of his course.

But if the Princes were not to "speak with" Mr. Kruger, they were to interview in Cape Colony—which territory appeared to them "as little better than a dust-heap"—the King whom Sir Garnet Wolseley had led captive; eighteen months later Cetewayo was to arrive in England the day before the *Bacchante* reached Cowes. The ex-Zulu King, to their surprise, weighed over 18 st., nearly three times the weight of the younger Prince, who some fifty years later, causing himself to be weighed at the Birmingham Trades Fair, found that he still scaled considerably under 11 st. The giant girth of the ex-Zulu King perhaps recalled childish delight in the great interest which their father always took in the weights of his friends; at Sandringham a weighing-machine stood in the front hall, in which every guest had to be tested, Lady Rosebery being the only person to whom exemption was granted. The Prince of Wales himself never shrank from the ordeal, and would quite candidly admit any increase, or joyfully record any decrease, of his own avoirdupois.

The unhappy Treaty of Majuba extinguished any notion of a naval brush with the Boers; and Lord Clanwilliam, his orders to make for Singapore having been cancelled, proceeded to Australia and northward to Japan—of which the Princes carried away a permanent record in a dragon tattooed on their arms—and thence to China. Leaving Hong-Kong, the *Bacchante* sailed through the Sea of China and Straits of Malacca to Ceylon and thence across the Indian Ocean to Aden, and so through the Red Sea and the Suez

Canal to the Mediterranean and home. Home was reached on the 5th of August; the Prince and Princess of Wales boarded the corvette off St. Alban's Head, to find their sons—the elder of whom was now considerably taller than his father—acting as midshipmen at the foot of the gangway ladder. Then, on board the *Osborne*, the Royal party led the way to Cowes Roads, to draw up in front of Osborne, where the *Bacchante* saluted the Royal Standard with twenty-one guns: and thus closed a cruise which had extended, in round numbers, for over 45,000 knots.

Belated Confirmation was by no means unusual half a century ago, and no special surprise was felt that the brothers should almost have reached early manhood before their Sacrament was administered. The "laying of hands" on the Sovereign's grandsons at Whippingham Church on the 8th of August was almost the last duty which Archbishop Tait undertook; before the end of the year he had striven to make his final peace with his God, by making peace with the priest whom he had honestly but unhappily persecuted, and had passed to his rest. In the course of the instruction which accompanied the solemn rite, the Archbishop—*quantum mutatus*—urged the desirability of frequent communion: an injunction in sharp contrast to the veto imposed by the Prince Consort when his eldest son, from the White Lodge, had expressed a wish to take part in the early celebration at a neighbouring church.

The world tour, with all its advantages, was to offer scant facilities for acquiring fluency in foreign languages. The

then Prince of Wales spoke German and French with entire ease and perfect idiom, and before restoring Prince George to the naval duties to which he was now dedicated, he despatched him to Lausanne to "learn languages". But three months in a community where English folk abounded did not carry an out and out British Prince any considerable way in the desired direction. For German he at no time displayed any taste or aptitude; a solid working knowledge of French was later, and rather laboriously, acquired, but King George, in 1912, when commending his eldest son to the care of the Marquis de Breteuil, expresses his regret that his own French should be far from what he would like it to be, and his determination that the Prince of Wales shall have every opportunity of perfecting himself in a subject likely to be of first-rate value to him in after-life.

The young Princes were now considered as fully fledged, although it was at a "half-grown-up" party at Dudley House in the December after their return that they made their entrée into the then restricted community which bore the not very refined, and later very misleading, label of "London Society".

"Boys will be boys", was the confused apology of an indulgent father to the College Dean when his eighteen-year-old son had committed some clumsy peccadillo. "Yes", was the reply, "but that is not to prevent my taking steps to prevent their becoming foolish men." The Prince of Wales did not suggest himself as the over-indulgent father, but he thought—and wrote to the Dean of Christ Church





*Prince George as a midshipman on H.M.S. Bacchante. He was evidently a serious young man, made grave by the knowledge of his future responsibilities. He has the characteristic features of the House of Guelph.*



on the subject: "Young men are not schoolboys and should not be treated as such." He fulfilled his parental responsibilities with scrupulous care, but he was far from fettering and fretting his sons as he himself at their age had been fettered and fretted. His own robust constitution and tireless energy contrasted sharply with the delicacy alike of physique and demeanour, the shrinking from anything approaching the boisterous, which marked his elder son and might at times act as something of an irritant; the love of fun and frolic, the eagerness and *élan* with which the youth of the younger was so fully endued, were dear in his father's eyes and served to forge a bond between them from which "Prince Eddie"—the idol from his birth of his mother—could not but be a little withdrawn.

That winter Prince George was to lay the foundation-stone of his reputation as a trained as well as a natural shot.<sup>1</sup> Norfolk offered slender opportunities for hunting, and a drawback, if not a danger, to riding to hounds was to be found in the innumerable rabbit-holes with which the country was pock-marked. For a long time the birthday parties at Sandringham would always be wound-up with a meet of the West Norfolk hounds at "The Hall"; the Prince, Princess and their family would invariably take part in the proceedings—the Princess, mounted on her favourite mare, Viva, and always "led" by Sir Dighton Probyn, proving that she was a bold and skilful horsewoman, although compelled to ride on the wrong side. To some of the guests, and es-

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the century Lord De Grey was said to stand out by himself as a shot, while immediately behind him would be the Prince of Wales, Lord Walsingham, the Hon. Henry Stonor and Mr. Archibald Stuart-Wortley.

pecially to those of foreign extraction, who rather reluctantly accepted the offer of a mount, the occasion was not always one of unqualified pleasure. The horses were apt to be rather short of exercise and unpleasantly "fresh"; and the riders, now and again, somewhat inappropriately clad, would show that, however accustomed to Court life, they were quite unfamiliar with the sport of kings. For a considerable time, however, Prince George took every chance of going out with the hounds and was at one moment even keener than his elder brother; in later years, whether from lack of opportunity or because he really cared little about horses and hounds, King George retired altogether from the hunting-field and would only be seen mounted either on a shooting pony, a faultless hack, or a perfectly trained charger. From boyhood he had a "nice" seat and good hands—horses went "kindly" with him—but his horsemanship pales into insignificance beside his real prowess with gun and rifle. Devoted as King George has been to the pursuit in which he excels to supreme degree, he has always declined to be exploited by wealthy hosts who have sought the honour of entertaining him by the assurance that the day's doings would issue in phenomenal bags. The hunting-field must always be something of a republic, but for the *nouveau riche* the "shoot has the agreeable flavour of despotism, and smacks—so entirely to his taste—of wealth. The army of keepers and beaters, the elaborate luncheons, the cars and carriages to convey the ladies to and from the scene of slaughter, the total absence of any risk (except that of being peppered by an inexperienced colleague)—all this warms the heart of the plutocrat, whose only difficulty is to ignore

the smiles of the keeper, provoked by the total inability of his employer to handle a gun. No price could be too dear for such a one to pay, no pie too humble for him to eat, if he can secure the presence of a Royal Prince, in whose train other guests, after whom his soul yearns, will be sure to follow. To invitations of this colour the King has always turned a deaf ear, and has let it be known that he values his opportunities for indulging in his favourite pastime not only for the shooting itself but for the intercourse which he then enjoys with men whom he chooses to admit into the circle of agreeable companionship.

On the 25th of August 1891, Prince George was promoted to the rank of Commander: no undue reward after thirteen years of service, in which a keen sailor had spared nothing and shirked nothing on his path to professional efficiency. The next two years were pregnant with events which would shape anew his life and, from their very force, influence his character. That autumn domestic circumstances induced the Princess of Wales, instead of returning home after her annual visit to Copenhagen, to proceed to the Tsar's country place at Livadia for a long stay with her favourite sister. The Prince of Wales thus spent his 50th birthday in the Princess's absence, and the sense of separation was perhaps reflected in a letter in which he rather sadly suggested that to have passed the meridian of life and to have enjoyed life's best hours was scarcely a subject for birthday congratulations, however kindly meant.

Sandringham was, indeed, under something of a November cloud. The Princess of Wales was absent during the



month, almost for the first time in a quarter of a century; a serious fire, with much damage, had occurred, and in the midst of the birthday festivities, already shorn of much of their usual gaiety, Prince George was seen to be so unwell that his father, hurriedly bidding good-bye to the little family party which had assembled, brought his son to London: he was soon to know that the Prince was suffering from enteric fever—the very malady from which he himself had barely recovered twenty years earlier—and that the germs had probably been contracted by the patient when on a visit to his elder brother, then quartered with his regiment, the 10th Hussars, at the Curragh. The fever ran high and grave fears still prevailed when the Princess of Wales, after travelling continuously for 160 hours, reached her son's bedside; nor was it until December had well set in that the doctors could give the glad bulletin of "Out of Danger". But "out of danger" did not mean "out of the wood", and over a month was to elapse before a naturally vigorous constitution reasserted itself and the young Prince, who had just been able to travel to Sandringham for Christmas, could be pronounced as convalescent. It was from his sick-bed, therefore, that he heard of the betrothal of the Duke of Clarence to the Princess Victoria Mary of Teck, and he was still little other than an invalid when the Duke, who had caught cold at the funeral of Prince Hohenlohe, was attacked, on the 9th of January, by a specially vicious form of influenza then prevalent. Three days of poignant anxiety and, upon his mother's breast, there then was to die a Prince of whom it was always said that, from end to end of his short life, he was guiltless of an unkind word and incapable

of an ungenerous action. Popular grief was very genuine, perhaps because popular imagination was deeply stirred. A sob of sorrow seemed to shake the whole country, and every mother mourned for a mother who was never quite to recover from the blow dealt to her in the death of her first-born son. "Was there ever a more terrible contrast," the Queen wrote aptly to Lord Tennyson, "a wedding with bright hopes turned into a funeral?" The Poet Laureate hurriedly penned some rather inelegant lines, and Mr. Gladstone, evoking memories of his childhood, likened the tragedy to the death of Princess Charlotte, and only found consolation in reminding himself that the mournful occasion gave remarkable evidence of national attachment to the Queen and Royal Family.

After the Duke had been laid to his rest at Windsor, the Prince and Princess with their son and daughters spent a few weeks in strict seclusion at Eastbourne—where the Duke of Devonshire lent them his seaside villa—and on the Riviera, at Cap Martin, where they received no visits. They could not, and would not, be absent from the golden wedding of the King and Queen of Denmark at Copenhagen, but took no part in the festivities; the remainder of the year was to be a period of deep mourning, and Time was to prove the slow healer of a deep wound.

For Prince George the change was radical; so far the bright years had simply succeeded one another, and year by year he had increased in popular favour; life had frothed with fizz and fun. There had been plenty of work, but the work had been delightful; the old people would nod their heads as they saw the good—and only the good—qualities

of his forebears reproduced; his comrades, perhaps all unconsciously, looked forward to a time when comradeship with a King's son might be one of agreeable value. But those who were closer to him saw a young man still in the early spring of life cast off some of his former characteristics, as if he were discarding an old robe. With swift decision he seemed as if resolved to shape his life anew; great responsibilities were going to be incurred; great duties, the bare possibility of which had hitherto not occurred to him, would have to be undertaken; a great apprenticeship must be immediately served. Destiny, he was sure, is always a hard schoolmistress and expects her scholars to make few blunders.

Instead of the constant mirth which would now and again steal up to the edge of boyish mischief, there must be steady thought and serious study: the days that were passed had rippled with laughter; the days ahead need be no less essentially happy, but a quieter colour would pervade them. It was as if someone with a comprehensive sweep were expelling all the mental furniture which seemed too lightly constructed and too gaily coloured, and were rearranging the chambers of his mind with no other than pieces of solid make and sober hue.

But with it all there seems to have been the prominent desire to say all, do all, and be all he could for the mother, still so youthful, still so radiant in her matchless beauty, through whose soul the sword of sorrow had pierced. "My first joy since"—the mother was to whisper on a June day two years later when a tiny grandson was placed in her arms.

The Queen took an important step on her birthday—it might, not unreasonably, have been taken a little earlier—and created her eldest British grandson Duke of York, Earl of Inverness, and Lord Rothesay in the Peerage of the United Kingdom. Speculation had been busy as to which of her uncle's titles the Sovereign would revive, or whether she would prefer that borne by her father. The last Duke of York, it was murmured, had been loose in his morals, free in his cups, careless in his money matters, and a failure in the field; on the other hand, the most superficial student of military history knew that the Duke had stamped himself indelibly and for good on his office as Commander-in-Chief. Sandhurst Staff College, free postage to soldiers on active service, and other excellent institutions could be traced to his hand; it was remembered that the Duke was the next younger brother to the Duke of Clarence among the sons of George III., and general satisfaction was expressed when the dukedom of York was conferred on the Prince, who was henceforth to loom large in the public eye. The Peerage was to be no pale label; if the Duke of York did not associate himself with any particular measure, he was an assiduous attendant at the House of Lords and from the Peers' Gallery would follow closely—and—usefully—any debate of importance in the Lower House.

Henry VIII. was only twelve years old when State reasons conspired with the wish of his father to oblige him to enter into a contract of marriage with the sixteen-year-old widow—no more than the nominal widow—of his elder brother. No such pressure of circumstance existed now, but the marriage of the eventual Heir to the Throne was at once

a matter of national and special importance, as, failing him, the Crown would be likely to devolve on his eldest sister, the wife of a nobleman of conspicuous merit, whose situation, however, as Consort to the Sovereign might not have been very easy. The choice of brides was limited; it was important that blood-royal should flow in her veins, but a Princess imported from Germany would have been frowned on alike by the Sovereign and the people, and, indeed, in the eyes of the Sovereign and the people, one Princess alone was eligible.

For more than a year "Princess May", whose name constantly lingered on every lip, refused to listen to the slightest suggestion of any sort of engagement or understanding between herself and the cousin who had been the favourite playmate of her childhood. But on the 6th of May 1893 it was joyfully published that the Duke of York had affianced himself to the daughter of a very gallant soldier-Prince and of a Princess who, until the daughters of Queen Victoria had grown up, stood in the public eye as the representative of the Royal House, whose popularity was a proverb, and whose presence was every time and everywhere a source of delight. It is always a question whether a daughter is helped or handicapped by a mother such as the idolised Princess Mary, but the nation knew, as if by instinct, that the daughter had here either derived or had been careful to acquire the precise qualities and talents which would render her the helpmate as well as the Consort of a King.

The marriage took place at the Chapel Royal on the 6th of July. The day was not proclaimed a public holiday, but



high holiday was kept in almost all parts of the Queen's dominions; and two days later the Queen addressed to the nation a letter of gratitude for the welcome given to her "beloved grandson and his dear bride". Exuberant spectators thronged the route of the wedding procession from Buckingham Palace—where the bride for the first time had lodged—along Piccadilly to St. James's, and in the City, through which the newly married couple drove under escort to the Great Eastern Railway en route to Sandringham, the streets were lavishly decorated, the London crowds being computed to exceed those which had assembled for the Queen's Jubilee. Only one serious accident occurred, when Lord Tullibardine<sup>1</sup> was thrown heavily from his charger, in the forecourt of St. James's Palace, and rather badly injured.

Despite the importance of the occasion, it was regarded as a family rather than a State affair, and crowned heads, other than the grandparents of the bridegroom, were not present. The Kaiser was represented by his sailor-brother, Prince Henry—who, twenty years later, was to earn for himself the reputation of being *facile princeps* among German observers—and the Tsar of Russia by the Tsarevitch Nicholas. The physical likeness between the Duke of York and his cousin of Russia was a theme of general comment, and a boyish friendship now cemented was sealed when the Russian Prince returned the next year to stand sponsor to the baby born at White Lodge. "I shall always look back with such pleasure to my charming stay at Marlbor-

<sup>1</sup> Succeeded his father as 8th Duke of Atholl.

ough House for Georgie's wedding", he wrote to the Prince of Wales just after he had ascended his father's Throne and entered on the career which was to end in hideous catastrophe.

## CHAPTER IV

1893-1901

### THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK

TO the Duke and Duchess of York was assigned a fine apartment <sup>1</sup> in St. James's Palace, to which the designation of York House was given; the innovation met with the disapproval of some of the earlier generation of the Royal Family, who associated the rooms with the sons of George III. (the churlish Duke of Cumberland refused to give them up even when he became King of Hanover) and the Duchess of Cambridge, the last of whom had lived there for nearly forty years: St. James's Palace had been sufficient address for these and earlier notabilities—so old-fashioned folk argued—and why must the name be changed now?

A cottage which had served for the overflow of bachelors from the House at Sandringham was converted into a not particularly convenient or commodious residence, and here the name of York Cottage was very appropriately adopted.

<sup>1</sup> After King Edward's accession, the apartment was reserved for special guests whom it was not convenient to entertain at Buckingham Palace, and both President Loubet and President Fallières lodged there. In 1915 King George lent the rooms to Lord Kitchener, and it was from there that he started on his fatal journey to Russia.

Between London and Norfolk, for over seven years, the Duke and Duchess divided almost all their time; that time was punctuated by public duties, always ungrudgingly undertaken, and by visits to country houses and private entertainments in London, neither of which were very freely indulged in. The spirit of home prevailed, and the care of constantly arriving children was the main preoccupation of still youthful but very carefully ordered lives. Three sons and a daughter were born within a period of six years, and, of these, the youngest—to whom Lord Roberts, flushed with successes in South Africa, stood sponsor—betrayed at first some signs of delicacy; his birth had occurred when the Duchess was in very natural anxiety about her beloved brothers, who were all in the thick of the fighting, and was mourning the death of her father. A lapse occurred before two other boys, of whom the latter was not to survive boyhood, made their welcome appearance. "I shall soon have a regiment, not a family," a more than contented father would proudly say.

The *cursus* for the children was carefully observed, and they were little in public view. Queen Alexandra, as a youthful mother, was to be seen almost every summer day driving in the Park, through serried lines of carriages, with three little girls; her daughter-in-law, deeming it well that no outing should interrupt the prescribed lesson hours, would on her drives be more generally, and of course less picturesquely, accompanied by a lady-in-waiting. It was a moment when children were beginning to be the objects of the photographer's camera, when their co-operation at charity bazaars was being asked for, when their dresses as bridesmaids



*When the present King was Duke of York and a Lieutenant  
in the Royal Navy.*





and pages were assuming an important place in news paragraphs; wise parents saw in all this a danger that the little ones might lose, never to regain, some of their freshness, and the Duke and Duchess wisely decided that publicity would devolve upon their children quite soon enough, and that they had better remain simple, childish folk as long as circumstances would allow them.

Schoolroom lessons were largely supervised by a French lady<sup>1</sup> who had for some years acted as *lectrice* to the Duchess, and who in that time had done much to stimulate an existing, if patent love of literature; but while the eldest son was still of fairly tender years the Duke of York consigned him to the care of a tutor of remarkable athletic prowess and considerable mental achievements, who remained with his pupil until he launched him on his first term at the University. Tutors and masters, governesses and mistresses, however trustworthy and however efficient, did nothing to interfere with the vigilant personal care of the parents, who, when the hour of parting came, keenly felt the pangs of a ten months' separation which the Colonial Tour of 1901 necessitated. Riding, for which at first the young Princes showed little inclination and which was always wholly to the taste of their sister, and games, where again the sister would be the leading spirit and would occasionally involve her brothers in scrapes, formed a large and wholesome part of an education which, if thoroughly British, was thoroughly sound.

<sup>1</sup> Madame Bricka.

"Albert Edward Prince of Wales knows everything except what is written in books," said Mr. Gladstone, who, moreover, was constantly amazed to find that the Prince, to whom he was devoted, should have so accurate a knowledge of almost all men except men of letters. A story was current that when the name of a famous writer of severe fiction was suggested for an Order of Merit, King Edward, was quite prepared to admit the merits of the author, but confessed to total ignorance of all his works. That the then Prince of Wales acquitted himself with entire success—and something more—at a luncheon in connection with the *Dictionary of National Biography*, was only a signal instance of how perfect tact, exquisite courtesy, and a genuine desire to please can, taken together, be a substitute for any sort of expert knowledge of a subject at issue.

To say that the Duke of York was not a voracious reader is not to suggest that books were ever foreign to him; he read them then—as he has read them since—steadily, diligently and intelligently, but rather from the information to be derived from the pages of a volume than from any delight in reading for reading's sake. He would certainly not subscribe to Lord Morley's description as "most seductive, most deceiving, and most dangerous of all professions", but he would regard it, no less than the dramatic and musical arts, as a thing quite apart from his own life, and, with the exception of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, writers have scarcely been admitted into the inner circle of his acquaintance. The pleasure which could not be derived from literature was reserved from early years for philately; to the study and the acquisition of stamps of strange hues and from many lati-

tudes delicious hours have been devoted, and on them considerable sums of money have been carefully laid out. In this respect difficulties may sometimes have arisen, as it must have happened over and over again that collectors—real or *soi-disant*—have sought to ingratiate themselves in favour by offers of rare and rich specimens. A rigid rule of reciprocity has, however, always been observed, and offers, from whatever source, have only been smiled upon if a fair equivalent in cash or kind were accepted in return.

And the quiet years, which were, in truth, years of preparation, rolled on—public duties, of course, thickening with each; some of these were big with interest and even bright with pleasure, some were the necessary and rather burdensome acknowledgements of what Destiny had conferred in station of life, and of what the country had granted in emoluments to sustain it. There was much to be done, but it was done without flurry or friction; political troubles affected the Duke and Duchess but little, and, unlike King Edward, they would be no partisans in any private differences. Moreover, they were high in favour with Queen Victoria, and the jealousy—sometimes acute and sometimes dormant—which had coloured her relations with the father of the Duke and the mother of the Duchess, was converted into sincere affection for, and outspoken admiration of, the young people. Robert Southey has placed on record that there is much more household feeling, of mutual affection, quiet enjoyment, love of country, and sober, sincere religion, in the Dutch writers than in any others; the inference he drew was that there is more domesticity, a more general diffusion

of moral feeling and real substantial happiness, in Holland than elsewhere. Had the poet been allowed to rise from his grave fifty years after he was laid there, and penetrate into the *vie intime* of the eventual Heir to the Throne and his family, he could have used no more appropriate terms in which to depict it.



## CHAPTER V

### THE "OPHIR"

THE deep-seated effects of the surrender to Mr. Kruger in 1881 were perhaps only fully revealed in the protracted Boer warfare which darkened the close of the old and the dawn of the new century; the sun of Queen Victoria's glorious reign was to set under storm-clouds which at times were black with menace. Throughout the Queen's life her physical condition had been robust, and it was not till the late summer of 1900 that symptoms suggesting perils to life were apparent. On January 2, 1901, she nerved herself to welcome Lord Roberts on his return from South Africa, where the command-in-chief had devolved on Lord Kitchener, and she even gave him a second audience three days later, when she showed her usual anxiety to learn all details of the recent progress of the war. But a collapse followed the General's departure, and from that date the Queen's physicians recognised her condition to be hopeless; on the 19th her children were summoned to what was to be her death-chamber, where two days later the German Emperor made his theatrical and not particularly welcome entrance; at six o'clock in the evening of the 21st, with her eldest son's name on her lips, Queen Victoria passed to her rest. Whatever mistakes the historian of the future may

charge to her, this can never be gainsaid: she ascended a Throne which, largely owing to its misuse by her immediate predecessors, was almost immediately to creak even under her slender weight,<sup>1</sup> and she bequeathed an Empire unparalleled in magnificence in the history of the world. She had taken her calling very seriously, and through more than sixty years she had laboured ungrudgingly and untiringly: her tiny hands had a grip of steel on all and everything, and the crown on her brow was to become a living symbol of Imperial unity; every year of Queen Victoria's reign—all honour to the Queen herself—was to deepen the impression that the British Sovereign typifies the common interest, the common sympathy, and the sense of brotherhood permeating the territories which form the British Empire.

The funeral took place at Windsor on February 4, after a stately progress across the calm waters of the Solent and through the thronged streets of London; but the Duke of Cornwall took no part in it. A December funeral had adduced the chill to which the Duke of Clarence succumbed; the Duke of York, now the Duke of Cornwall, was already in the grip of a chill, and was peremptorily forbidden to encounter the risks which a January funeral would surely entail.

Already in 1898 a proposal was afoot that the Duke should tour Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and perhaps pay a flying, but official, visit to the United States. With the demise of Disraeli and the rising to fame of Joseph Cham-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Shaftesbury said in 1849: "The profligate George IV. passed through a life of selfishness and sin without a single proved attempt to take it. The mild and virtuous young woman has four times already been exposed to peril."

berlain—for whom, however, the Queen had more admiration than personal liking—the Colonies were constantly looming larger in the Sovereign's eyes; Colonial servants were no longer neglected or made to feel themselves inferior to their colleagues from the Foreign Office; Australia was just then on the *tapis*, while if only Sir Alfred Milner would wear a velvet glove to handle President Kruger, South African difficulties might still resolve themselves.

The Prince of Wales highly commended the idea of his son's visit to Canada to open the new bridge at Montreal, and quite relished the notion of a call in America, although he hesitated when calculating the time required for Australia. But with the passage through Parliament of the Australian Commonwealth Bill for the federation of the various States, the Colonial Secretary became very vocal as to the Duke and Duchess of York opening the first Commonwealth <sup>1</sup> Parliament at Melbourne. The Queen's willing consent had been secured shortly before her death—although she would have certainly vetoed any landing in South Africa in mid-war—but with her death King Edward showed reluctance to part with his son for so long a period, and asked Lord Salisbury if the Australian visit could be postponed. The Prime Minister replied with a robust negative, of which the King at once recognised the force, and preparations were rapidly made for the departure of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall on the 16th of March.

<sup>1</sup> The Queen had protested against the term Commonwealth, which she identified with Cromwell; she only yielded the point when it was submitted to her that Commonwealth and Dominion bear the same meaning, and that the former title had historical associations quite apart from the great regicide.

If there were a wide difference in the status of the Prince who had gone afloat, whether as cadet, midshipman, or Lieutenant, and the Prince who, with his father's mandate in his breast, was about to visit his father's Dominions, there had been a fairly long step from being Duke of York to being Duke of Cornwall. For some unexplained reason, no precedence is accorded to the eldest son of the Prince of Wales as such, and the Duke of York had been only *primus inter pares* among the Sovereign's grandsons, while it fell to his Duchess to yield the *pas* to her sisters-in-law. The Duchess of York had accepted the anomalous situation with a simple dignity and reticence which none knew better than herself how to assume; but in an earlier generation the Duchess of Edinburgh had bewailed long and loudly that the only daughter of the Tsar of all the Russias must pass into and out of a Throne Room behind the Consort of a minor German Prince. The Duke of Cornwall was now *nulli secundus* among the Sovereign's subjects, and was to play the undisputed lead in a State tour, which had, nevertheless, a certain holiday atmosphere about it; a seasoned sailor and traveller, he would also be able to act as showman at the many ports of call with which he was already pleasantly familiar. The question only arose to be dismissed, as to the titles under which the Royal pair would travel. The new King had been for so long and so intimately known as the Prince of Wales that it would need some little time to dissociate him from that designation, and it was quickly decided that the King's son would sail as Duke of Cornwall and York. Duke of York he had been for nine years by creation, Duke of Cornwall he was automatically as the

son of the reigning monarch, Prince of Wales he would be at his father's good pleasure.

The vessel selected to assume the dignity of a Royal yacht for the voyage was the Orient Line twin-screw *Ophir*. The ship's company included 125 blue-jackets, 100 marines; 37 bandsmen of the Royal Marines, Chatham; 20 boys; 7 engineer officers, with an engine-room complement of 88; 50 stewards, cooks, bakers, butchers, barbers, painter, and 1 laundryman and his wife. Why the laundryman of all the crew should have been granted the solace of his wife's company is not clear, unless perhaps he did not feel competent to deal with the starching and goffering which the elaborate toilettes of 1901 necessitated; occasion indeed arose when excessive heat and insufficient packing were said to have played sore havoc with some specially dainty mourning confections.

As to the suite, many suggestions were offered, and many people suggested themselves, or their friends, for service. But events went to show that it would have been difficult to improve on its final composition. Prince Alexander of Teck, the youngest brother of the Duchess, with whom all her girlhood at home and in Italy had been associated, was a tried soldier as well as a delightful companion. Lord Crichton and the Duke of Roxburghe had just seen plenty of fighting in South Africa; thirteen years later one was to be foully done to death and the other wounded beyond entire recovery by the Germans. Lord Wenlock, who was to preside over the little band of devoted servants, was precisely what our friends in France describe as "*le vrai type de gentleman anglais*". Canon Dalton, though sixty years had



passed over his head, undertook his not very onerous sacerdotal duties with all the buoyancy of a newly-fledged Deacon. Sir Charles Cust, Commander Faussett and the Hon. Derek Keppel were themselves, and no service need demand more of them than that. The ladies-in-waiting<sup>1</sup> were already on terms of happiest friendship with a very gracious and unexacting mistress.

Sir Arthur Bigge<sup>2</sup> was the new and most important recruit, and in any story, however slender or disjointed, of the master he was so long and loyally to serve, he must have a tribute to himself. His career in the artillery had been as brief as it was brilliant, and in the Zulu campaign he had won the open-mouthed eulogies of Sir Evelyn Wood and Sir Redvers Buller, commanders who were never fluent in praise. So when a gunner, still in his twenties, exchanged the camp for the Court—and incidentally brought to the Court all the candour of the camp—the British Army, if unaware of it at the time, suffered a real loss. A labour of love in the form of a journey with the Empress Eugénie to the spot where the Prince Imperial fell in fight, and twenty arduous years in the service of Queen Victoria, had left a once greatly promising soldier with little to learn as to the duties of a confidential secretary. There are men—and Arthur Bigge has always suggested himself as one of them—whose sense of right and wrong is so acute and insistent, who set their standard of life so high and yet see it so clearly, that it would seem as if with them a conflict between good and evil had been fought out and determined before reach-

<sup>1</sup> Lady Katherine Coke, Lady Mary Trefusis, and Hon. Mrs. Keppel.

<sup>2</sup> Created Lord Stamfordham, 1911.

ing the threshold of manhood; for men such as this it is as impossible to swerve by a hair's-breadth from the straight path as it would have been out of the question for Liszt to strike a false note on a musical instrument or for Gainsborough to blend the colours amiss on his canvas. But inflexible uprightness mates with restraint rather than with impetuosity, and is apt to beget peculiar caution. The great difference, we have been told, between Pitt and Grenville was that the one could see nothing but the trophies and the other could see nothing but the bill. It has sometimes occurred to close observers of current events that a *servus bonus et fidelis* has been disposed to view certain opportunities with the eyes of Grenville rather than with those of Pitt; it has even been suggested—perhaps quite erroneously—that if from time to time a stimulating rather than a restraining influence had been at work, the historian of the future might have been able to depict in even warmer colours some part of the imperishable worth and work which marks a reign unrivalled in historical importance.

Gibraltar on March 20 was found indeed to be *en fête*; for days great-coated and perspiring soldiers had worked in drenching rain so that each corps in the garrison might have its own triumphal arch and scheme of decoration. Quite distinctive were the efforts of the Royal Berkshire, the Camerons—who insisted on welcoming the Prince as Earl of Inverness—the Royal Fusiliers—of which the Duke was Honorary Colonel—the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers. Much of the ceremonial was marred by heavy rain: a military review was cancelled, as were inspections of the famous fortifications, and the only event the weather



which carried its own warning as to the warmth of Antipodean welcome.

Aden and flowers are contradictions in terms, but Aden was not going to let her welcome fail even in this respect, and two fine bouquets, price Rs. 100 each, had been brought from Bombay for the Duchess of Cornwall's acceptance. The *Ophir* steamed into Colombo on the 12th April; and in replying to the address of welcome, the Duke could refer agreeably to the main details of local progress, in those phrases which always seem to give satisfaction to the hearers, however they must know a good deal more about the subject than the speaker. There is always a tendency to regard highly-placed orators as sort of august mediums who mechanically utter words suggested to them by their "control", in accents either politically inspired, as for instance in the Speech from the Throne, or deliberately voided of any colour or fire. "Il faut que le roi dise quelque chose de spirituel aujourd'hui", the courtiers would often say when the daily programme for Louis XIV. was being drawn up. The speeches which punctuated the Colonial tour admittedly retained too strong a whiff of the official draughtsman; the text was generally a little stilted, the tone a little cold, and there was but slender evidence of the many happy thoughts which were to fall later in no less happy sentences from the lips of King George V. It is not unthinkable that the Duke may have himself felt some dissatisfaction with the obviously prepared orations which he pronounced at this period, for the famous "Wake up, England" speech which he delivered at the Guildhall at the end of his great Odyssey, and which laid the foundation-stone of his success as a speaker,

was known to be entirely his own in theme and almost entirely his own in construction.

Ceylon could report that since "Prince George's" last visit her trade and shipping had more than doubled, harbour works inaugurated by the then Prince of Wales in 1875 had been pushed steadily forward and inland ways greatly extended. Up to and at the station when the Royal party left for Kandy were huge crowds of black, brown, and yellow subjects of the King, gaudily but sparsely attired; and on the platform were two large groups, one representing devil-dancers and the other the ancient Kings and Queens of Kandy, the latter having seemingly been highly disfavoured by Nature. Some master-mind had conceived the idea of bestrewing the railway lines with detonators, which exploded to the accompaniment of shrieks of delight, while the whole railway line was a triumphal route with crowds of natives, arches of bamboos, and salaaming elephants to whom buns were thrown from the train.

Kandy was beside itself with ecstasy and of Oriental reserve there was no trace; every elephant that could be procured had been mobilised for the great Perehera, and for some days feasting was rampant. Colombo, when the party returned, marked its sense of the occasion by taking away the Indian orderlies from the Governor to serve as a Royal escort, and persuading that official to content himself with a dozen mounted infantrymen and a couple of cyclists. The short space between the return and the sailing at midnight of the same day was crammed with incident. The city thronged its quay-sides for a final glimpse of the floating palace which held Ceylon's incarnation of its ruling family.



Meanwhile the ships' crews of the *Ophir* and her escort had been not a little exercised on the question of shore leave. No leave had been granted at Colombo. It was on the day after leaving that port that the Duke intimated by signal that ships' companies were to have sixty hours' leave at Melbourne and Sydney, adding, doubtless from personal knowledge of the breed: "His Royal Highness hopes the men of the squadron, from having a little more money in their pockets than they would have had, had they spent it in the great heat of Colombo, will thoroughly enjoy their leave in Australia."

Singapore, tricked out with every grotesque and extravagant device, was reached on the 21st of April, and the next day the Sunday-stemmed stream of official speech-making was released, no less than twelve Addresses, each in its casket, being on offer. Amid the lavish and, from the artistic point of view, rather lamentable decorations, an inscription in huge words under an enormous Union Jack lent Kipling's vivid verse to the occasion:

Take hold of the wings of the morning,  
And flop round the world till you're dead;  
But you won't get away from the tune that they play  
To the bloomin' old rag overhead.

Jingoistic words and jingoistic days, when public institutions were honest enough to wave Union Jacks and spout Kipling, when no one criticised the National Anthem, but roared it out simply because it was what it professed to be. As a matter of fact, the National Anthem was at that mo-

ment occupying the attention of the future "Master of the King's Musick." During the previous reign the music of "God Save the Queen" had been subjected to a *rallentando* which by no means pleased King Edward, who told Sir Edward Elgar that he did not wish the National Anthem to sound like a dirge. With some trouble the scores were altered and the pace speeded up, until by degrees it reached a *tempo* which caused King Edward's successor to allude to it as a jig, and to ask, by no means unreasonably, that "God Save the King" should again slow down a little.

Both for Australia and Canada there was now to be a first experience of Royalty on the grand scale, and both countries were just a little dubious as to whether Colonial freedom of manner might clash with etiquette; there seems to have been a latent fear lest the trappings of State should not "fit in" amongst the rugged pattern of life in shirt-sleeves. Such fears were groundless; it was nothing less and nothing else than "*Veni, vidi, vici*" the Empire round, and the visit was fruitful in nothing but mutual good.

Two days out from Singapore on the way to Melbourne the little fleet crossed the Line and received King Neptune, or rather a separate ocean monarch, each claiming empire, on every ship. The Duke himself had, of course, long ago received his diploma from the Chief Sea Dog, but by his own wish he once more, at the head of his ship's company, paid his tribute in the time-honoured and good-tempered fashion. Marshal Foch once observed that, while greatly admiring our system of regimental sports, he feared it might be difficult to institute it in France, as the Colonel would have to take part in every event and also win it lest there

should be any subversion of discipline. The spectacle of a future monarch being manhandled by some of the humblest of his future subjects is unthinkable in any other nation, but Great Britain is at once democratic and aristocratic enough to understand that no loss of dignity can accrue from a Prince of the Blood joining freely in the people's mirth.

At Melbourne, as elsewhere, the official welcome, led by the Governor, Lord Hopetoun,<sup>1</sup> was quickly swamped in the rapturous greeting of a Colonial public endowed with leather lungs. Round the Royal carriages clattered a noble escort drawn from mounted regiments in every State in the Colony and New Zealand. Australia was still on the wave of war enthusiasm, and to do honour to the visitors 1400 cavalry and 11,000 dismounted troops had been massed in Melbourne, which itself was almost hidden in decorations.<sup>2</sup>

The Levée the following day was attended by 4000 gentlemen, and no troublesome question arose as to who had or who had not the right to be presented; a clean shirt and a decent dress suit were the only credentials required for a handshake with a future Sovereign. Four thousand grips, many of very fervent pressure, constitute something of an ordeal, but the Duke—like the future Mr. Britling—would “see it through”, though a few moments’ pause was necessary to rub fingers which had become both chafed and numbed. The great event of the opening of Parliament was

<sup>1</sup> Created Marquis of Linlithgow in 1902.

<sup>2</sup> A German archway scarcely echoed the Kaiser's inner feelings with the text: “*Wir wollen sein ein einzig Volk von Brüdern*”; the inevitable “*Gott mit uns*” was truer to German sentiment.

preceded by an evening reception, held on May 8, for which occasion "what should be worn" had been a source of much anxiety and some heart-burning. The leading officials so far overcame their democratic prejudices as to squeeze their stalwart figures into the gold lace coats of St. James's, with the correct "continuations" of knee-breeches and silk stockings; official information had, furthermore, been given to the ladies that half-mourning would be worn, an exception being made in favour of "very young girls", who might appear in white; to judge from the predominance of that virginal hue, Ninon de l'Enclos was a fool to the majority of Australian ladies.

The State opening of Parliament took place on the 9th of May in the vast building erected at the Centenary Exhibition of 1888. The ceremony, well prepared for, was carried out with perfect dignity, and when the Duke pronounced the words which created a Commonwealth, the Duchess touched with a golden key a golden button and automatically the news was flashed around the globe.<sup>1</sup> Twelve thousand voices cheered themselves hoarse, trumpets blared, and guns roared defiance; Australia was a united State subject only to the direct sway of Edward VII. A State concert in the evening brought the great day to a harmonious conclusion. There was to follow the magnificent Review, with a mustering of troops such as Aus-

<sup>1</sup> While the Duke was inaugurating the general Commonwealth Parliament, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons was voicing the report of the Committee of Supply that the Duke of Cornwall should have £20,000 a year in addition to the revenue of the Duchy of Cornwall, and that the Duchess should be granted £10,000 a year immediately, and £30,000 a year in the unhappy event of widowhood.

tralia had never before seen. The Duke, who was not to enjoy much promotion in the army until he finally commanded it, wore his uniform as Colonel of the 7th Royal Fusiliers, and 140,000 spectators greeted him as he took his place at the saluting-point. The cadets—pride of Australia—headed the march past, and after them streamed the pennons of the New South Wales Lancers and the green cocks-feathers of the Light Horse. The kilted battalions were specially picked out for applause, perhaps because service in these battalions gave the only opportunity to Scottish colonists to revert to the garb of their boyhood.

A dignified programme had been drawn up by the University for the 11th; and sufficient order was obtained for the conferring on the Duke of the degree of LL.D., and even a Latin Address was fairly audible. But the undergraduates were determined not to be overawed. The National Anthem was loudly acclaimed and loudly sung, but even more exercise was afforded to youthful lungs in a continuous and spontaneous "He's a jolly good fellow," which gave place to a cheerful refrain: "Saw my leg off—chop".

After Melbourne came Queensland. Owing to reported cases of fever the ships were kept away from Brisbane, the journey was made overland by train; but in order that all things might be done according to plan, the Royal party were taken in the early morning, without ceremony, from their railway carriages and transferred to the Government yacht *Lucinda* to be landed at Kennedy Wharf.

At Brisbane, 4000 troops paraded for inspection, and must have congratulated themselves that their own broad-brimmed hats were more suitable to the occasion than the



varied military headgear of the suite. The sun beat viciously on the Hussar busby of Prince Alexander and the metal helmets of the Blues, and the Duke himself must raise his Fusilier headdress more than once to wipe his brows.

A native corroboree, some foundation-stone laying, a cattle show, besides a more formal Levée and garden party, rounded off the Queensland trip and crammed the time until the departure, again by train, on May 24th, for Sydney. It was not known until later that an Italian cook had somehow made his way unchallenged into an Anarchist meeting held a few days before the date fixed for the visit, and had heard that something in the way of "blowing up" was to be attempted. A large contingent of detectives, therefore, took part as guests on each festive occasion, while for the protection of the Duchess in her apartments a highly trained member of the force was willing to pass a good many hours in the seclusion of a hanging cupboard.

The run down to New South Wales was not without a break. At Cambooya the train was halted so that the hospitality of the Bush might be offered, in the shape of a "billy tea" with real bush-made "damper". An exhibition of stock-riding at the same place demonstrated that the stock-rider has nothing to fear by comparison with the more widely advertised cowboy. The spectacle fired the ambitions of the "cavalry" members of the suite. There were troopers of a famous cavalry regiment in far-off London that would have revelled in the sight of their officer in "shirt-sleeve order" galloping into the mass of excited beeves on a bush pony, cracking his long whip in a manner entirely professional. There is a picture extant representing the subse-



*The present Prince of Wales as a little boy wearing almost precisely the same kind of sailor-suits as his father had worn at that age.*



quent tea-party, with the Duchess presiding from a kerosene-can seat, while the Duke was a little uncomfortably enthroned on an overturned log.

On May 27—the day after the Duchess attained her 34th birthday—the (then *soi-disant*) “finest harbour in the world” offered her bosom to the *Ophir*, and on the morrow the *Sydney Morning Herald* was moved to glowing periods to point the moral of the tour: “The acquisition of territory is a triumph of national achievement; but it is a small thing beside this re-creation of a new Britain in another hemisphere. The demonstration of Sydney yesterday embodied the message to this effect which our people desire to transmit by favour of the Duke and Duchess to the centre of Empire. It is one of special and commanding significance, and its purport will remain long after the cheers and acclamations of yesterday have passed away.”

At Sydney, routine of feast and function—perhaps too many of the functions took the form of feasts—was also agreeably relieved by the unorthodox greeting of University undergraduates when another LL.D. was added to the Duke’s degrees. The crowning effort of joyous youth was a song, hurriedly written to the tune of “A Life on the Ocean Wave”, which made up in sentiment what it lacked in rhythm:

But when he at last appears,  
The welkin we shall arouse,  
By giving the Jook three cheers,  
And three for his charming spouse;

And every undergrad  
With a throat to call his own  
Will not overlook the Dad  
Who is minding the Kids at Home.

Louis XI. might have had something to say to Gringoire for a good deal less than this.

The voyagers were set ashore in Auckland on June 11, to be greeted by the octogenarian Dr. Campbell, who had seen—and said so—"the fair city grow from a few tents and break-wind huts on the fern-clad shores of Waitemata to the stately city of to-day—the future Queen and Capital of all the federated isles of Oceania". The old Mayor did more than speak: he made a gift of People's Park and signed the conveyance "on the 61st anniversary of the year I left the Maori village of Waiomu, on the shores of the Hauraki Gulf, and entered the primeval forest to carve with my axe the canoe in which afterwards I made my way to the island of Motu Korea, my first home in the Waitemata". The Duke of Cornwall was to announce the incorporation of the Cook Islands in New Zealand, and in reminding his hearers that their territory was the first acquired by the Crown after the accession of Queen Victoria, he could say that although he had reached the spot farthest from his English home, no heart beat stronger for the mother country than the heart of New Zealand; of this the best proof had been given in the despatch to South Africa of a force which, in proportion to population, was larger than that from any other of the sovereign Colonies. How little did Australia and New Zealand dream that thirteen years later, with

their military houses meanwhile set in order, their contribution to England's needs would take shape in an unceasing stream of Anzacs, who poured themselves over the battlefields of Gallipoli and France.

From Auckland it was but a step to the Maoris, whose loyal protestations were to prove themselves to be no windy words. With due ritual, lamentations were made for the death of the Great White Queen Wikitoria, while one tribe chanted a thanksgiving for victory with obscure if prophetic allusions to the confounding of Germany.

More than delighted with their stay in warm-hearted New Zealand, and perhaps with a special thought tucked away of the purely Scotch community of Dunedin, the Duke and Duchess set sail on the 27th of June to make a rough passage to Hobart. Receptions everywhere, at Adelaide, Albany, and Perth, vied with one another in enthusiasm until on July 26 the miniature fleet left the Australian shores for Mauritius, South Africa, and Canada.

The Duke was now for a second time to set foot in South Africa when war was being waged there. The visit had been voted by some at home as likely to be, in that stock phrase, "rather difficult" or "a little imprudent", but the jeremiads fell on deaf ears and useful days were spent in Maritzburg and Cape Town, some of the party tiptoeing as far as Ladysmith. At Maritzburg, Lord Kitchener turned up, quite contrary to expectation and announcement, to greet his future King, to report on the very weary warfare which he was trying to accomplish, and to be present when the Duke pinned Victoria Crosses on the breasts of the bravest of the brave.



One episode occurred not without significance: a number of Boer prisoners, by special invitation, were present at Admiralty House, Simon's Town, for the departure of the Duke and Duchess, when a deputation drawn from them presented an Address and some specimens of their workmanship. The gifts offered with rugged courtesy were accepted with perfect grace. Five months earlier Kitchener had written to the War Minister with respect to Louis Botha's refusal to agree to the requirements of Milner and the British Government: "The Boers have a good deal of sentiment of honour, and leaving those, who had helped them, to go to prison for six years would, I felt sure, make it impossible for them to accept the terms offered. We are now carrying on the war to put two or three hundred Dutchmen into prison at the end of it; it seems to me absurd and wrong." It was not for the Heir to the Crown to traverse in any way the policy of the British Government, however he might agree with the views of the Commander in the field; but he could—and did—show on August 23, 1901, that what he looked for was not a South Africa beaten to the dust, but eventually a South Africa *amica*, who would harness her energy to England's effort in the day when that effort must be made. Thirteen years later King George would call the Transvaal patriots to battle and range them in line with his own great armies; the memory of a graceful act had not, perhaps, been wiped from the minds of men who at one time had borne arms against King George's father.

In mid-September the *Ophir* appeared in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and, for the second time, received a rapidly-applied coat of new paint before being permitted to show

herself at Quebec. The tour of Canada was to be the grand finale of a journey unprecedented in Empire history, and the trans-continental route was now not only completely available, but the journey could be made in circumstances more comfortable than would have been possible in Europe itself. This was as well, for flesh and blood have their limitations, and though the Duke of Cornwall's spirit was never more willing, signs of fatigue, due perhaps to a slight chill, began to be obvious to the close observers, although nothing was allowed to cancel a single activity.

The *Ophir* was signalled at Cape Breton on September 13, the anniversary of the battle on the Plains of Abraham by which Canada had been secured for the British Crown 140 years earlier; the actual landing took place at Quebec three days later amid a most striking demonstration of popular welcome, in which the English were not suffered to out-do the French. Ten days later, at Winnipeg, new University buildings were opened; while at Calgary a large body of Indians from the Western Reserve had assembled to welcome the grandson of their Great White Mother, a point of view which they insisted that the Duke of Cornwall should not miss. The party arrived at Vancouver on the 30th, and the next day at Victoria was an inspection—of which the Duke appreciated every moment—of the chief British naval base on the Pacific coast of America.

The return journey began on October 2, and a visit to Banff, the great health resort of the Rockies, an examination of farming operations on the prairies, and duck-shooting in Manitoba were incidents of the eastward trip. Toronto gave the Royal guests a tumultuous welcome, and treated them

to a Review of 12,000 troops. From Toronto a rapid tour carried the visitors to Hamilton, London, and other principal towns of Western Ontario; St. John's, New Brunswick, on the Atlantic Coast, was reached on October 17, and two days later at Halifax there were naval and military demonstrations in which 12 men-o'-war and 8000 troops took part.

Halifax nearly spelt finis to the tour and from Halifax the Duke of Cornwall, in a letter to the Governor-General, reviewed in really striking terms the main impressions he had gathered in Canada.

The *Ophir* left St. John's, Newfoundland, for the homeward run on October 25, and the run proved to be of the roughest; the Royal yacht behaved well throughout, but the way in which she pitched as she came up the Channel caused considerable discomfort even to seasoned sailors. So high a sea was still running that when the King and Queen came out on the 1st of November to meet the squadron, they could not board the *Ophir* and could only exchange greetings from a steam barge; the landing at Portsmouth was effected that afternoon.

London's official welcome took the time-honoured form of a *déjeuner dinatoire* at the Guildhall, to which the now Prince and Princess of Wales drove through a lane of cheering crowds. The Lord Mayor's<sup>1</sup> speech did justice to his Eton education; Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Salisbury—whose days of office were fast drawing to a close—and Lord Rosebery were at the top of their oratorical form, but it was generally agreed that the reply of the Prince of Wales more than held its own in interest and impressiveness of delivery with the by no means impromptu utterances of those statesmen.

Twice—perhaps in prophetic spirit, perhaps in deference to his father's wishes, or perhaps again on the spur of the moment—he introduced a compliment to the French in his remarks, calling the Suez Canal “a monument to the genius and courage of a gifted son of the great friendly nation across the Channel”, and speaking of the people of Mauritius as “gifted with the charming characteristics of Old France”. And was it also in prophetic spirit that he commended the movement which had taken root in Australia and New Zealand for the establishment of Cadet Corps; was there any thought at the back of his mind that the day might come when at his bidding Australia and New Zealand would leap to arms and place all their resources of manhood at his disposal? And to the clarion and wholly spontaneous cry that the Old Country must wake up,<sup>1</sup> if she intended to maintain her position of pre-eminence in Colonial trade against foreign competition, there was added the sober corollary: “But one condition, and one condition only, is made by our Colonial brethren, and that is, ‘Send us suit-

<sup>1</sup> “To the distinguished representatives of the commercial interests of the Empire whom I have the pleasure of meeting here today I venture to allude to the impression which seemed generally to prevail among their brethren across the seas, that the Old Country must wake up if she intends to maintain her old position of pre-eminence in her colonial trade against foreign competitors. No one who had the privilege of enjoying the experiences which we had during our tour could fail to be struck with one all-prevailing and pressing demand—the want of population. Even in the oldest of our colonies there were abundant signs of that need, boundless tracts of country yet unexplored, hidden mineral wealth calling for development, vast expanses of virgin soil ready to yield profitable crops to the settlers. And all this can be enjoyed under conditions of healthy living, liberal laws and free institutions, in exchange for the overcrowded cities and the almost hopeless struggle for existence which alas! too often is the lot of many in the Old Country. But one condition, and one only, is made by our colonial brethren, and that is ‘Send us suitable emigrants’.”

able emigrants'. I would go further and appeal to my fellow-countrymen at home to prove the strength of the attachment of the motherland to her children by sending them only of her best."

## CHAPTER VI

### THREE SOVEREIGNS

THE Prince of Wales on his return to London was to find that in much that would affect himself and his activities the old order had passed away, and a very different order of things was being drawn up.

Ever since the death of the Prince Consort the Court had been coloured in very quiet tones: the Sovereign had discontinued any residence—other than for a day or two—in London, and had eschewed all social functions; within the walls of Windsor Castle no sound of revelry had been heard; at Osborne and Balmoral domesticity had been the dominant note and the visit to Ireland, within a year of the Royal demise, stood out as almost a solitary occasion. The Great Queen of imperishable memory had reigned in something like mystery as well as majesty, and in the latter decades of her blameless life had remained—so far as mundane happenings were concerned—austerely aloof.

Now Buckingham Palace, renovated and reorganised, was to be the throbbing centre of the capital; the Sovereign would once more open Parliament in person; would convene Chapters of the Garter and lead processions of the Knights to St. George's Chapel; the monarchs of Europe would in succession be entertained in the Royal palaces



and lend their presence to Guildhall banquets; Drawing-Rooms by daylight, the terror alike of dowagers and *débutantes*, were to be abolished, and evening receptions, blazing with light and luxurious with hospitality, were to be substituted; at Edinburgh and Dublin the King and his Consort would hold their Courts; the Waterloo Gallery was to be the scene of a ball unrivalled perhaps in beauty; Investitures would again be clothed with full circumstance; public buildings would be opened in state, and public institutions inspected with ceremony.

In all these, as well as in graver matters, the Prince of Wales was to play a very necessary, if wholly secondary part. King Edward—unlike Queen Victoria—was not only King of England but also ruler of London, and to his rulings as regards all occasions, public or private, his son, like all his favoured subjects, must conform. What Buckingham Palace prescribed, Marlborough House—to which the Prince of Wales on his return at once transferred himself from St. James's Palace—must accept. As no puff of cloud ever overhung the relations between father and son, so no difficulty ever arose as to the son complying with the father's behests. The greatest of modern French comedians made one of his greatest hits in a play entitled *Mon Pere avait raison*. To on-lookers of King Edward's reign it might well seem as if the Prince of Wales had adopted that title to dictate his conduct of life. The Prince's own hospitality was to be on no small scale, and was inaugurated by a brilliant ball given at Marlborough House in 1903. The occasion was attended by unqualified success, but was not to be repeated; the expense was great, while even greater was the difficulty of limiting

invitations, a difficulty which would assuredly have grown with every succeeding year and might have resulted eventually in nearly as much social heart-burning as gratification.

Those folk who have lived astride the last half-century will remember that through forty years Queen Victoria rarely crossed the threshold of a private house, and scarcely a dozen persons could claim the honour of having received her as a guest; no entertainment outside her own demesne was ever graced by her presence; she visited neither opera house nor theatre, and an oratorio at the Albert Hall was her only taste of gaiety in public. With the Court at Windsor, Ambassadors, Cabinet Ministers, important officials, with or without their wives, would be invited to dine, and here—as wherever the Queen resided—everything was done on a large and expensive scale. At “breakfasts”<sup>1</sup> at Buckingham Palace or Chiswick or Marlborough House, the Queen would make the circle either in a small carriage or on the arm of her eldest son, and she would then sit in a tent rigorously guarded from all but Royal intrusion; personal friends would be greeted with a bow, or possibly half a dozen words, and a few men of the moment might be presented. Yet despite her aloofness from Society—an odious word for which there is no substitute—Queen Victoria exercised a very direct and real control over it. Disliking intensely as she did any scandal, and generally declining to hear any gossip stories, it would have been difficult for anybody who was “anybody” to misbehave in any way without such mis-

<sup>1</sup>The Queen generally alluded to these garden parties as “breakfasts”; “a breakfast always gave me a headache,” she once said to a youthful Guards officer who had the honour of speaking to her, and who was a little puzzled to know what she meant.

behaviour coming to her knowledge and being duly penalised. Be it remembered that although not one among a hundred of her guests ever even cast eyes on the Queen, no hostess in London could vie with her in generous hospitality. For two, and sometimes for three, balls, and for two State concerts invitations were issued every year, and the persons who received "commands" to be present formed a fairly large, but by no means elastic, circle: around it a cordon was drawn, and to secure an entrance a reputation without public blemish was, among other attributes, an indispensable passport. Thus, as regards divorced persons, the line drawn was hard and fast: so long as a husband and wife dwelt under the same roof, however notorious their infidelities, the Queen would pass no official comment, but for the divorcée, whether technically innocent or guilty, there was short shrift. The rule may have been harsh in some cases, but as it was entirely consistent, it represented the minimum of inconvenience, and it was reflected in large part on general social life. A lady who had in open Court been pronounced unfaithful was ineligible for any social gathering, and would only be invited to a dinner party if the other *convives*, having been duly warned, did not mind meeting her.

The regulation was in no whit relaxed by King Edward, and at more than one point was made even more stringent.

Thus, with the disappearance of that very picturesque functionary, the Master of the Buckhounds, the gates of the Royal Enclosure at Ascot were no longer allowed to swing open for anyone who was not wholly eligible for invitations to Court. Queen Victoria had held the reins pretty tightly, and had at times plied the whip, when deserved, pretty



*The Royal children, Edward (now Prince of Wales),  
George (now Duke of York) and Mary, out-of-doors on  
a summer day.*



smartly. King Edward's hold over persons was even stronger because his personal acquaintance was so large; because he still allowed himself to be an honoured guest at many houses, and to be where he was, or anyhow not to be debarred from going where he went, was a main object of social ambition. From first to last King Edward let it be known that if anyone chose to bid to their entertainments persons on whose fair fame there was a public blot, they need not look to him as a guest in their house again. Never man breathed in any station of life who was kinder or more tender-hearted to those who had stumbled and fallen in life's path, and in private he was only too glad that any and every consideration should be shown them; but a very shrewd Sovereign knew precisely what constituted the public, and what the private, life of himself and of everyone of his subjects.

To glance ahead into this reign, the Coronation year was too big with public occasions to allow of much private entertainment at Court; but on their return from India the King and Queen followed much on the lines earlier trodden. They dined and danced at the great houses and gave dinners and balls and small dances—the latter especially to please the burgeoning Prince of Wales—at Buckingham Palace; they visited theatres frequently and with evident pleasure, and the Opera infrequently and with scarcely less evident reluctance; they inaugurated the custom of the King's attending Ascot Races in semi-State on all four days: in a word, they ruled the social days and nights, and their smile or frown was to be no less important than that of their predecessors.



But with the end of the War and the apotheosis of a vast number of persons who had been concerned with the War, many of whom had never spoken directly with the King, Society—the word seems inevitable—became swollen to a point which would have for its physical counterpart something like “giantism”.

The huge congeries which now replaced what was formerly a small, well-defined and very manageable section of the Sovereign's subjects could no longer be controlled by Court influence, and from its very nature became independent of Court favour. Censorship from high quarters could no longer be healthily exercised, and without the slightest sign of anything like degeneration, a go-as-you-please régime was the natural consequence. Thus it would happen that ladies who, perhaps more than once, had figured as the technically “guilty” parties in the Divorce Court might have access to social functions where a quarter of a century earlier the very thought of their presence would have been scorned. But if a certain sort of personal influence had perforce to lapse, there remained for the Sovereign the far nobler duty, performed with no less zeal than discretion, of noting, approving and rewarding, not only with official honour but with personal recognition, men and women who have rendered signal service to the State, whose deeds have reflected honour to the country, or who have devoted themselves with heart and brain to one or other of the great causes of humanity.

Over his own social province, however, the King would remain rigid in his control. He would exercise his veto as and where he thought right in the matter of candidates

for access to the Ascot enclosure, and for the mammoth Garden Parties at the Palace his direct invitation—or direct approval of an invitation—is necessary. One instance may suffice: it so happened in 1918 that the Foreign Office informed the department of the Master of the Ceremonies that, as the Russians had “come into line”, the representatives of the Russian Government were eligible for an invitation to the Royal Garden Party. Presuming that the Foreign Office had first communicated with the King, the usual formal notice of the party was sent to the Embassy. The King, on hearing of what had unhappily happened, said—and said very plainly and very rightly—that the Garden Party was his private concern, that no invitation was to be sent to Chesham House, and that the officials who had blundered must make the best job they could of the bungle. European events went to prove that the King—as was not unusual—displayed no less prudence than tenacity in the matter.

The Pauline injunction to a deacon to rule his house well applies with even greater weight to a monarch, and for such ruling the question of expenditure is of cardinal importance. An enquiry—by no means amiable in its origin—into Queen Victoria’s personal estate blew to the winds the reports of her vast accumulation of wealth. The expenses of her household were enormous, and no question ever seems to have been entertained of reducing them. King Edward had for nearly forty years been compelled to fulfill many of the duties of a sovereign with an income wholly inadequate for the purpose: his experience had taught him the value of money, and on his accession he caused the whole

matter of domestic expenses to be thoroughly overhauled, with the result that he was able to limit the outgoings from his establishment without diminishing by a jot either the dignity of his position or the generosity of his hospitalities, whether private or official. King George—as Prince of Wales—had not been called upon to bear anything like the burden of entertainment which had fallen upon his father's shoulders; although open-handed at every turn, he may well have striven, with the revenue of the Duchy of Cornwall, by careful procedure and judicious investments, to make provision for future generations, as the annuities granted to his younger sons would die with them. The Civil List of £470,000, as settled on the present King, did not vary in amount from what had been previously granted, and if the cost of living and scale of wages and pensions had not soared almost unthinkably, it might have proved adequate. But however "his house in order", a sum specified in 1910 proved wholly incommensurate for the bare requirements of dignity fifteen years later, and, to his honour, instead of making application to Parliament, the King sought and obtained the necessary amount to maintain his establishment from the funded property of the Duchy of Lancaster.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EUROPEAN SITUATION AND SOME DIPLOMATISTS

IF the Coronation of King Edward were the outstanding event of immediate importance, a multitude of invitations, official, social, philanthropic, were at once to be pressed on the Prince of Wales; whatever "rest and quietness" he had hitherto enjoyed, the days ahead of him were to offer but scant opportunity for leisure, and only his refusal to be "driven" and his inability to be flurried would prevent an overcrowding of engagements and overtaxing of a bodily strength which was not perhaps quite the equal of that of some of his forbears. The political situation at the moment was easy, as Lord Salisbury's Government, in a so-called khaki election, had won overwhelming support; but a long train of events had affected a new distribution of the force of nations, and, to use Mr. Gladstone's phrase, was unsettling every joint of the compacted fabric of Continental Europe. Underlying the thoughts of every thoughtful man lay the consideration of the peace of Europe, and there is evidence to show that to that matter the Prince of Wales's constant thoughts were turned. If the peace of Europe were to be really disturbed, England as a great constabulary authority might well in time, even if not in his time, be

called on to intervene. Such disturbance and such intervention—however remote or hypothetical—could not but concern the man who might at any moment be cast to play a weighty part in public affairs.

Just twenty-three years before the word "Serajevo" passed from lip to lip, a group of prominent Englishmen—among them Maurice the soldier, and Colomb the sailor—set themselves to write a forecast—with which Sir Charles Dilke associated himself—of the next war.<sup>1</sup> It was a work strangely prophetic, paradoxical, and topsyturvy, for while the war was accurately enough forecasted as breaking out over the assassination of a Balkan Prince, it was Ferdinand of Bulgaria who was cast for the part of sacrificial lamb, Russia who was the villain of the piece, France who violated Belgian neutrality, and Germany upon whose side we entered the war.

The contrast between the forecast and the reality illuminates the revolutionary change in the political atmosphere which followed the accession of Edward VII., although perhaps the greatest service of a great King of England is to be found in the fact that he recognised quicker than others the inevitable trend of events, and did all he humanly could to dissipate old animosities without stirring rancour elsewhere. In the new development which followed the Boer War his son played a rôle of increasing importance. Until within a few years of Queen Victoria's death her Heir-Apparent had to derive his news of foreign affairs from the public journals or from such communications as friendly

<sup>1</sup> "The Great War of 189—."

Ministers somewhat surreptitiously made to him: he was denied access to despatches and telegrams, nor must his voice be heard in any discussion on any international question of the hour. After his accession King Edward's confidences with his own son may have been a little more restricted than before, and a slightly cooler colour may have pervaded their relations without disturbing in the slightest degree the depth of mutual affection. But occasions would repeatedly occur when the King would insist on his son being kept *au courant* as to matters which were otherwise diplomatic secrets. "Let my son know, but no one else", was a phrase often to rise to the King's lips when a genuinely confidential matter was imparted to him.

There were not wanting incidents—of which one may be quoted—when the Prince of Wales's counsel was wisely allowed to prevail. General Botha in 1907 proposed to acquire the Cullinan Diamond for presentation to King Edward in token of the loyalty of the Transvaal people and of their appreciation of the grant of self-government. The Legislative Assembly agreed, and the jewel was offered to the King. Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner, entirely approved Louis Botha's generous thought and action, and Botha himself, when in London, told the Prince of Wales how anxious he was, from a South African point of view, that the diamond should pass into the King's possession.

A strenuous, if subterraneous, controversy had, however, arisen as to the desirability of accepting the present: the Cabinet was tepid on the subject, the Prime Minister rather timidly suggesting that the matter should be left to the King's judgment, which was "so good in matters of this



sort". Lord Esher strongly opposed the opinion of Lord Selborne—who might be thought to know something about the matter—and urged that acceptance of the gem would merely glorify and enrich Mr. Cullinan, the Director of the Premier Mine. The Prince of Wales, on the other hand, wrote to the King, who was at Marienbad, saying that he knew how anxious the Dutch were that the gift should not be refused, and how much he therefore hoped that the King would say "yes". A little later Lord Selborne's despatch arrived, entirely endorsing the Prince of Wales's opinion. This was all-sufficient: the King was always prone to trust the man on the spot, and he quickly replied that he had now made up his mind to accept the diamond as soon as it was officially offered by General Botha.

George Prince of Wales may have lacked his father's flair for foreign negotiations, chiefly because he was—as compared with, in some respects, an incomparable father—unacquainted with the foreign Princes and statesmen in whose hands were the threads of European policy.<sup>1</sup> Except for a week in Paris, largely dedicated to sight-seeing, his visits to the Continent had been almost entirely of an official character. "I hate abroad", was the sweeping statement of an all-British Marquis. It is not to accuse persons of insularity to suggest that foreign methods are apt to fidget them, foreign circumstances are liable to be uncongenial, and foreign folk are sure to remain wholly foreign to them. Even the scenery

<sup>1</sup> King Edward on his accession was on very easy terms with many of the European Monarchs and on friendly terms with them all, though any benevolence to the Kaiser was rather a forced plant. King George's relations with his august coequals were agreeable rather than intimate, correct rather than cousinly.

on the Continent—as apart from the scenery of the Colonies—would make no great appeal to an out-and-out England-loving Prince of Wales: the hills and valleys of the home counties would attract him more than any Swiss ravines or Italian ranges; he would always find the Avon lovelier than the Arno, and the Severn more stately than the Seine. Nor had the son that irresistible personal magnetism which radiated from the father: the smile of courteous greeting was less apt to broaden into the smile of hearty welcome, but his shrewd common sense and his acute sense of honour—no less in international than in home concerns—made the part he played, however subordinate just then, of signal value to his country.

Although each person disliked the other mainly because he or she belonged to the Chuzzlewit family, they one and all concurred in hating Mr. Tigg because he did not. This was the situation in the Pecksniff circle, and it illustrated with some accuracy our position towards the close of the Boer War, England being Mr. Tigg, and the comity of Continental nations representing the Chuzzlewit family.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which had been in the air for nearly a year previously, was signed January 30, 1902. The original proposal to include Germany broke down under the vacillating policy of Berlin; the Alliance, however, denoted the definite breaking away from the old policy of splendid isolation: the German Navy Law of 1900 with a Preamble which read like an open challenge to Great Britain, the repeated rebuffs encountered by this country in her efforts to establish friendship with Germany, the attempts

of the Kaiser to bring about a *rapprochement* with Russia, and the danger of France being drawn into a Continental *bloc* under German lead—all these, among other considerations, made it clear that something must be done, and done quickly, to get out of the rut into which our diplomacy had fallen. At this juncture the King, whose meeting with the Kaiser a few months earlier had not left a pleasant taste in his mouth, proposed that the Prince of Wales should travel to Germany, for the occasion of the Imperial birthday. King Edward's object was two-fold, inasmuch as he wanted to propitiate his nephew and to forestall a visit from him which at the moment would have been specially inconvenient. The Prince of Wales fell in—as he was accustomed to fall in—with the King's suggestion which, however, had little attraction for him. His own relations with the Kaiser had been marked by courtesy rather than by cordiality, and those who touched Prince George's boyhood and youth at any point may have thought that something like discreetly veiled antipathy existed, anyhow on the side of the English Prince. The sinister vision of a German hegemony of Europe, and of the world's misery which ruthless and reckless ambition was to bring about, may not have occurred to him until much later on; but the frequent and heart-to-heart letters which passed between Queen Alexandra and the Empress Frederick were open to him, and the devoted son of a devoted mother could not but regard with repugnance what was nothing else and nothing less than deliberately unfilial conduct.

The Kaiser closed at once with his uncle's offer. "The visit", he wrote, "is a most kind idea and gives me great

pleasure; we shall do everything to make him like his stay". Very strenuous and very tactful efforts would anyhow have been required to make the Prince of Wales "like his stay", which, as a matter of fact, was within a hand's throw of being cancelled. While Kaiser and King were exchanging notes of superficial friendliness, and the latter was being appointed as Honorary Admiral "*à la suite* of the German Navy", the Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag was delivering a stinging rebuke to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain for a speech delivered at Edinburgh which was supposed to contain disparaging references to the German troops in the war of 1870. The German Press loudly echoed Von Bülow's discourse, and trumpeted so insolently and so mendaciously the "barbarous methods" of British soldiery in South Africa, that the King could not but write: "In sending my son to Berlin to spend the anniversary of your birthday with you, I intended it as a personal mark of my affection and friendship towards you, but after reading the violent accusations which have been made in the Reichstag against England, I think it might be better for him not to go where he is liable to be insulted. . . ." The letter, which was as sharp in tone as an amiable monarch could render it, was anyhow accompanied by a birthday gift, and the Kaiser hurriedly penned an answer so unctuous in phrase that the proposed visit was allowed to stand. The Prince, arriving in Berlin on the 26th of January, was met by his cousin at the station and treated with every mark of honour, and was himself to perform so tactfully a duty which carried little pleasure, that the following year he was asked

with some *empressement* to take part in one of the big shoots at Letzlingen.

In the summer of 1898 M. Rouvier's Government stumbled and fell, and after several false starts M. Henri Brisson formed a Cabinet and sent M. Delcassé to the Quai d'Orsay. The appointment was one of great moment for this country. M. Delcassé had but to grasp his Portfolio to recognise that a system of French pinpricks into English flesh, at that time more than usually sensitive, was a source at once of delight to Germany and danger to France. His first step was to appoint M. Paul Cambon as Ambassador to St. James's in succession to Baron de Courcel, with definite instructions to work for an Anglo-French understanding. Paul Cambon asked for nothing better and no better choice than Paul Cambon could have been made. Prince Gortschakoff once said of the Duc de Morny that he was "*un ambassadeur modèle*" because "*il déchirait toujours ses instructions*" if they contained anything that might be disagreeable to Russia. Cambon may not have gone so far as Morny in this respect, but in the difficult years ahead he would often, prior to conveying the contents of a despatch or telegram from his Government, suggest that the text or tone might well be reconsidered before delivery of the message to the country to which he was accredited. He brought to bear on his delicate duties the personal touch which counts for so much more in diplomacy than the casual critic is prepared to allow, that which in fact serves to distinguish an Embassy from a Post Office. A man of the world to his finger tips, he was a deep as well as a quick thinker. No stress of emergency could ruffle him nor find him lacking in the exact



turn of words suitable to coax or otherwise convert his hearers to his own way of thinking.

Prompt to act when necessary, he had the great gift of knowing when to leave well alone; a diplomatic *cordon bleu*, he could give to "notes", suggestions, and *démarches*, the most appetising of flavours. The *entente cordiale* of April 8, 1904, was but the *hors-d'œuvre* for a succession of dishes the *pièce de résistance* was the British Expeditionary Force of 1914. Through the weary South African warfare, when French hostility—born of Fashoda—if frothy was virulent, and when the Prince of Wales was even more vehement than his father in denouncing the foul French caricatures—contemporary and coequal with those issued in Germany—and the Duc d'Orléans's even fouler applause of them, an Ambassador's dexterity and genuine good-will were to smooth away rough edges which might otherwise have inflicted indelible wounds. So also when the Dogger Bank episode—which elicited the outspoken anger of the King's son—suggested a crisis, if not an *impasse*, Paul Cambon's quiet remonstrances with Count Benckendorff—perhaps the only other diplomatist who later on "appealed to" King George—were to be effective in bringing Russia to an immediate sense of what was due from her.

From the very first Paul Cambon seemed to secure the hearty appreciation of King Edward's son, who was soon to extend to him a measure of friendship of which very few of the Envoys to the Court of St. James were then able to boast. In the eyes of George, Prince of Wales, an Ambassador or Minister was a personage to be highly considered and courteously entreated rather than admitted to any sort of



intimacy. Count Deym and Baron de Staal, to quote no others, had been on the friendliest terms with King Edward; but that popular Russian Ambassador may possibly have suggested himself to a very downright and youthful Prince as something of the amiable pussy cat. The Marquis de Soveral was the friend of the whole Royal Family almost as much as he was the friend of any one of them. Count Mensdorff, *le petit Mensdorff*, must always have savoured of the *petit maître*; compassion, rather than liking, for a poverty-stricken, remotely connected relative may have induced a kind-hearted King to wipe from the tablets of his memory the slander against England to which the man who had fed out of England's hand—perhaps when bewildered by adversity—was reported to have set his name. "Remember that my last two Ambassadors to Paris have been Viceroy of India, the highest post an English subject can occupy", was Queen Victoria's subtle remark to the outgoing Ambassador from Albert Gate in 1893. The hint had not been forgotten, and France, after more than one misfire, was to match a man with an opportunity perhaps unparalleled in importance in diplomatic annals.

In the years which led up to, as in the years which marked the War, Count Benckendorff nearly, but not quite rivalled Paul Cambon in pleasant relations with the King; to him also was accorded the *entrée par les petites* as well as *par les grandes portes*, and he was perhaps the only other Envoy to the Court of St. James to whom the King would listen personally and at length before referring the subject at issue to the Foreign Office. A nephew of Princess Lieven, Benckendorff had all the astuteness without a grain of the malice

which characterised the famous Ambassadress, who alternately coaxed and quarrelled with every Minister of the Crown, and disdained no intrigue if it could in any way benefit Russia. A German Balt in remote origin, but Anglo-Franco-Russian to his very soul in every other respect, the last Ambassador of the Tsar was as loyal to the country to which he was accredited as to his own, and the King knew well that every word which fell from his lips was uttered in no interest other than that of the peace of Europe.

The King's regard for the Russian Ambassador, and his anxiety that amity should mark our relations with Russia, can be illustrated by an incident. On one occasion when Count Benckendorff was unable, through illness, to attend a Court, the King ordered one of the Rules of Ceremony to be waived so that Countess Benckendorff should pass the Presence in the proper sequence<sup>1</sup> held by Russia instead of passing last, as was originally laid down in the book for the wife of the *chef de mission* should the *chef de mission* himself be absent.

Yet another Ambassador must have a word to himself. "My God, Mr. Page, what else could we do?" is the exclamatory phrase quoted by the American Ambassador when the King was expounding to him the situation which had arisen when Belgium and France alike appealed for the British help against a hulking enemy to which both countries were entirely entitled: the King at the same time may have

<sup>1</sup> While willing to *laissez faire* when requests from foreign representatives were properly submitted, the King would resent deeply anything like a liberty. During the Coronation celebrations a quite minor Mission coolly asked if they might be received at Buckingham Palace earlier than their appointed time, as one member had to go to Manchester. The King's reply was: "They shall pass last."

been hinting his lament that America should remain absent from the feast of friendship which she knew was offered to—though not pressed on—her. If Mr. Page's quotation be literally correct, it gives proof of the Sovereign's momentary emotion. King Edward had—perhaps unconsciously—imparted to his son his own deep sense of reverence, and on his lips the name of the Almighty would rarely occur in jest<sup>1</sup> or anger. King Edward's tongue was the reverse of an unruly member, and exultation, disappointment and passing anger were alike incapable of drawing from him any expletives. King George—perhaps on account of his naval experiences—would be more forcible in his language and might be disposed to employ freely the monosyllable which some philologists suggest is a contradiction of *Domine*.

Mr. Page in his letters has much that is lively, as well as veracious, to say about the King; he abounds in descriptions of his visits to Buckingham Palace and of the conversations there held, but to Mr. Page letter-writing came as a delightful recreation after a long day's work, and in his allocutions to Mr. Doubleday he would stretch himself on paper just as Mr. Balfour in similar circumstances would have stretched himself on the golf course or tennis ground.

Speaking of British interests in President Wilson's Mexican policy in 1913, with the underlying apprehension that it might strain Anglo-American relations, the King is cited: "I do not want anything done which might cause us to be misunderstood by your country. Our friendship and good

<sup>1</sup>The story is authentic that at a very gay supper party one of the guests, having had a syphon squirted over him, chaffingly quoted Queen Elizabeth: "God may forgive you. I never can." The then Prince of Wales said gravely to the person: "That is a name which must never be used in jest."

understanding shall not be broken, impatient investors and yellow journalists to the contrary, notwithstanding." The sentence somehow seems a little "unlikely", and one contrasts it with the remark which Lord Kitchener, with the full approval of the Sovereign, made to Colonel House in the autumn of 1915: "America herself can alone decide whether it is right or wrong to take up arms. But one thing is certain—if America bears no part in the waging of war, she will be allowed no voice in the making of peace."

The Ambassador strikes the correct note in alluding to the Sovereign to whom he was accredited for five years as "frank, friendly, and well-informed; he is very much more important than most people think, and his real power grows out of his personality".

Pleasant as their relations had always been, America's entry, however belated, into the War was, of course, to knit a closer tie between King and Envoy, and the latter could tell his trusted correspondent: "He became even familiar in the smoking-room and talked about himself and his position as King—'Knowing the difficulties of a limited monarch, I thank Heaven I'm spared being an absolute one'. He went on to enumerate the large number of things he is obliged to do, not at all in a tone of complaint but as an impersonal explanation."

When due discount is allowed for Mr. Page's very evident appreciation of the Royal *accueil* accorded to him, there is reason to think that an Ambassador who was at once a high-couraged official and a cultured man of letters had special claim to the King's favour in a period when darkness was abroad and difficulty was everywhere.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ENTENTE

WHAT a good thing it would be if we could have a general agreement", exclaimed the Prince of Wales to Cambon, when early in 1902 he had read the letter in which the Ambassador proposed to Lord Lansdowne an Anglo-French agreement. "It is excellent", had been King Edward's verdict on the proposal. "The Prince of Wales must see this letter at once." With the letter the first step had been taken along a path which was to bury an enmity as old as Creçi and Agincourt, to light new fires of chivalry, to drench again with English blood the fields of France, but in the end to save England and France alike from the accursed system which for over thirty years had been threatening to terrorise the world.

Lord Salisbury, worn out with work and sorrowing without ceasing for the wife who had been his partner alike in his triumphs and his troubles, was just about to make way for his nephew: Mr. Balfour, with his talent for seeing with deadly accuracy both sides of a question, Lord Lansdowne, with diplomacy bred-in-the-bone, Mr. Chamberlain, stung by rebuffs and by now clear that Anglo-German amity was outside the range of international politics, and Lord Cromer, keen to get a free hand from



France for necessary doings on the Nile, were partners to the deal, by which we sacrificed certain interests in Morocco as a set-off to concessions in Egypt, and conflicting international interests were the subject of bargaining in many quarters.

Here circumstance was to be helpful. King Edward was sure that, whether to pursue as far as possible a path of peace or to prepare for a trial of strength, a close *entente* with his nearest neighbour was a matter not only of mutual interest but of sound common sense. As he rested on the Royal Yacht at Cowes recovering from the serious operation which had perforce postponed his Coronation, the idea occurred to him—and was eagerly endorsed by his son—of an early, and a State, visit to Paris. Lord Lansdowne, when consulted, was willing if not wishful, but the enthusiasm on the subject of one of his subordinates, Sir Eric Barrington, fired the Minister to give warm, if belated, approval to his Sovereign's project. President Loubet eagerly concurred, and arrangements were afoot even before the King's convalescence was established. The visit itself took place on May Day 1903, when the tact and courtesy, and above all the graceful speech delivered in perfect French at the Hôtel de Ville, broke down an icy barrier set up at first by the Parisians, who before the King's departure surrendered at discretion to his charm.

The thought of extending the *entente* to Russia, France's Ally, came almost automatically to the British Ministers, but Count Lamsdorff from the Russian Foreign Office was keeping his eye on the broad path to the Far East. Baron Aehrenthal, the wily Austrian Ambassador at St. Peters-



burg, was more concerned to push forward the country to which he was accredited than to keep her back, and, an adherent of the *Drei Kaiser Bund*, was working for an understanding between Russia, Austria and Germany, although, as he expressed it, in such a fashion that the wire Vienna-St. Petersburg should not lead *via* Berlin. There thus happened the paradox that, whilst France was "making up" to England, Russia, her ally, was "making up" to Austria, but in so doing was risking trouble with Great Britain. An insurrection in Macedonia, and Russia's preoccupation in the Far East led to a momentary triumph of Aehrenthal's policy. Lamsdorff, a dried-up, fusty little man, carrying with him an odour of parchments, and giving an impression that, if one pricked him, ink would flow instead of blood, let ink flow at Müritzsteg, 1903, so as to be able to make blood flow in Manchuria, 1904; revolutions, disasters, peace treaties, and propaganda succeeded—or were confused—with one another until there was to be found in Bolshevism the greatest admixture of blood and ink of them all, while the assassination of a King and Queen of Serbia on a June day in 1903 served as a grim reminder that Balkan States cannot be judged by ordinary civilised standards.

In April 1904 the Prince of Wales was to hear of the first meeting between King Edward and Count Isvolsky, then only Russian Minister at Copenhagen, but destined a few years later to play, when Ambassador in Paris, a part as prominent as it was puzzling, and to be declaimed against by German publicists as the *âme damnée* of M. Poincaré. Scrupulously groomed, bemonocled, well built if



*Pomp and Circumstance in the Nursery: When the Royal children went out with their attendants, in the year 1900.*



rather high-shouldered, despite a touch of apparent effeminacy intensified by a drawling voice and tendency to be epigrammatic, Isvolsky somehow made appeal to a very virile King, who wrote and spoke of him in terms of high approval to more than one of his relatives, until the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which occurred when Isvolsky was at the Foreign Office, caused Sir Charles Hardinge to represent him to King Edward in a far from favourable light.

Royal visits may, or may not, be vested with any importance, but the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Austria in the spring of 1904 had its purpose as well as its programme, the latter of which was so crowded that on the third day the exhausted guests were compelled to cancel three items of it. Their arrival in Vienna on April 20 was at once sweetened by the Emperor claiming the Princess—in review of her father's long and frequent stays at the Imperial Court—as “something of a Viennese”. Wreaths were reverently laid on the tombs of the ill-starred Empress and her still more unhappy son, and a visit to the Cathedral Church and the Imperial Treasure Room—where the Princess could already show that works of art had their full meaning for her, and were by no means outside her knowledge—preceded a so-called “family dinner” at Hofburg and a ball in the Hall of Ceremonies into which, at the very reasonable hour of 8.30, the Emperor led the Prince of Wales, the Princess following with the Archduchess Maria Josepha.

Two days were punctuated by a gala dinner with 100

guests in the Hall of Ceremonies, when, following the rather childish custom, the Emperor donned the tunic of a Dragoon Guardsman, and the Prince wore uncomfortably the uniform of the Austrian artillery, a really brilliant ball given by the Archduke Frederick, where the Princess danced till the small hours of the morning but from which her husband—to whom capercailzies were more attractive than any ball, however brilliant—stole away with Archduke Franz Ferdinand to shoot at Neuburg; by an occasion in which fifteen carriages were ruthlessly and rather meaninglessly driven through an expanse of violets and pansies, and lastly by a dinner and reception at the British Embassy which gave infinite pleasure to every one except the stray British in Vienna who were not favoured with invitations. The visit was voted, and indeed scored, an unqualified success, and the chief visitor had not been slow to make a good many acquaintances and note a good many circumstances alike to prove of future value to him. For the next four years, moreover, he was to be kept closely and correctly informed on Austrian affairs, reflecting themselves as they did in every corner of Europe, by his brother-in-law, the Duke of Teck, who had just taken up his duties as Military Attaché at Vienna, and who was to show that, in order to be valuable in that capacity, it is even more important for a military attaché to be a gentleman first and a soldier afterwards than to be classed in the category of scientific officers.

Late in the evening of St. George's Day the Prince and Princess arrived by special train at Stüttgart for a short stay, the chief object being the investment of the King of

Wurtemberg with the Order of the Garter. The ceremony, for which the services of King Edward's Master of the Ceremonies were enlisted, was held in the Great Throne Room of the Royal castle and was followed by the inevitable banquet fixed, as at Vienna, for an hour at which, when at home, the illustrious guests would have been discussing their afternoon tea. Wurtemberg had special interest for a Princess whose father was shut out of his place in the "succession" because Duke Paul contracted a so-called morganatic marriage with a lady in whose veins flowed the bluest Hungarian blood, and whose family was probably of older and purer lineage than that of the Prince whom she married for love. But on her accession, Queen Mary was by special permission to quarter the Wurtemberg arms, to adopt the Wurtemberg colour for the Order she would give to her ladies-in-waiting and maids of honour, and to look directly to Wurtemberg for her paternal origin. How little likely did it seem then that three years later, while the Wurtemburgers were still abstaining from the grosser German malpractices of war, one of the junior Princesses should hazard the remark: "Our Wurtemberg cousins are very clever", to be met with the answer from a very downright Peeress: "You call them clever. I call them beasts."

The visit to Vienna had for its immediate answer a visit to London from the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, on whom the Grand Cross of the Bath was to be conferred. The Heir-Apparent to the Hapsburg throne, whose death was to set Europe ablaze, was, like many Austrians, on friendliest terms with King Edward; unlike many Austrians—indeed,



unlike the average Austro-Magyar aristocrat—he spoke no English and rather resented English being spoken in his presence. He took the then conventional continental view that England with her tiny army could play no great rôle in purely continental politics. A fine figure of a man, tall and erect, somewhat corpulent, with a broad energetic brow and piercing steel-blue eyes, he was a man who knew his own mind and could be either a warm friend or a bitter foe. Much in his character recalled his great ancestor the Archduke Charles, the same soldierly qualities, the same disdain for pettiness and intrigue. His marriage to a Slav lady of the *petite-noblesse* had alienated him from the German element of the Empire, and brought him into conflict with the Hapsburg dynastic tradition, while the Emperor and the Austrian aristocrats would lose no opportunity of airing their own superiority by slighting the unfortunate Duchess. His love for hismorganatic wife was that of a very strong man for a very helpless woman; he could not shelter her from the insults which cut them both to the quick, but he could, and did, console her with unstinted love. The dark hour at Serajevo when they met death side by side was the close of a tragic pilgrimage in which they tasted much of pomp but little of happiness, much of flattery but little of friendship, and where they were throughout overshadowed by a viciously scintillating crown.

In the spring of 1905 the Prince of Wales was invited to Berlin for the marriage of the German Crown Prince with the Duchess Cécile of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The Prince had known the bride as a baby at Cannes; he had

greatly admired her father for his patience and courage under trying circumstances, both physical and domestic; he had greatly deplored the vagaries of her mother, a Grand Duchess of Russia, whose peculiar habits were likely to earn for her the cold shoulder of the Kaiserin. The invitation was accepted under reserve, but a little later was cancelled on account of an impending, and highly important, visit to England of the King of Spain, the name of Prince Arthur of Connaught being suggested to the Kaiser as a substitute. The cancellation of the visit was perhaps not to be regretted, as the Prince of Wales's luminous sincerity might conceivably have led him into a trap which King Edward's thick-and-thin determination to please would have enabled him smilingly to avoid.

But the Kaiser spoke acidly to the British Ambassador<sup>1</sup> of the Prince of Wales's obvious unwillingness to come to Berlin at the bidding of the All Highest; it was shocking to think that the Prince had not even inspected the German regiment of which he had by Imperial decree been appointed Colonel.

King Edward, who was always willing to make a graceful concession or to yield a point if courteously submitted, had no idea of receiving a scolding under flying seal through his Ambassador, and relations between the two Courts became, like the relations between the two Governments, increasingly uneasy; hence, it has even been thought possible to suggest, Germany's action in suddenly proclaiming her interests in Morocco. The tacit admission by Great Britain of a French Protectorate in Morocco had

<sup>1</sup> Sir Frank Lascelles.

been one of the cornerstones of the *Entente Cordiale*. Germany at the time had raised no objection, even though the Anglo-French Agreement had been negotiated by M. Delcassé in preference to a Franco-German *entente* sought for by the Kaiser on a basis of fair words and no favours—or anyhow of no favours from Germany to France. The Russian disasters and the Kaiser's growing dislike for M. Delcassé produced a change in Germany's attitude. The Kaiser had led off with a speech at Bremen, on March 22, 1906, which, as often, bordered on profanity. "Ye are the salt of the earth", he told his audience; "but if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"<sup>1</sup> A week later Von Bülow announced in the Reichstag Germany's intention to open direct negotiations with the Sultan of Morocco, and there followed the Kaiser's trip to Tangier to announce his intention of upholding "the interests of the Fatherland in a free country". The European atmosphere grew suddenly lurid, and when it was known that the Sultan of Morocco, inspired by the German Minister at Fez, had rejected the French proposals for "reforms" and would invite a Conference of European Powers to decide the future of his country, the lightning seemed about to blaze. France began by declining the Conference; Germany replied with a skilfully-veiled ultimatum, and despite the encouragement received from King Edward and his Ministers, M. Delcassé's colleagues, in their discretion, deemed the moment inopportune for any challenge. The Kaiser for the moment

<sup>1</sup>The allocation drew from a leading journal the reply that if Germany were the salt of the earth, England is the salt of the sea, an altogether stronger condiment.

scored, and the French Foreign Minister fell; to England's chagrin M. Delcassé resigned on June 6.

German chucklings were premature, for the Algeciras Conference left French predominance in Morocco unprejudiced, and Count Reventlow, an arch Pan-Germanist, complained, not without reason, that it was a diplomatic defeat and that the Kaiser and his Chancellor had threatened war without meaning it. This result was due largely to the stiff stand made by the British representative, Sir Arthur Nicolson, whom Count Tattenbach in disgust described as "more French than the French". Germany had done enough to make herself disliked, not quite enough to make herself really feared; even to so genial an apostle of Exeter Hall morality as Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman the thought must occur of armed support for France. The Kaiser, in revealing to England and France their own weakness, had even suggested its remedy; had he forgotten that the mailed fist should grip a mace—and not a needle?

A European *bloc* directed against Great Britain was dominating the Kaiser's policy; at Björke he stealthily drew from his pocket a cut-and-dried scheme for a German-Russian Alliance and prevailed upon a weak, though well-meaning Tsar, to sign what was little less than a betrayal of Russia's ally. England and France now sought with new energy to compose Anglo-Russian differences, and the Tsar, having been roundly told by his Ministers that the Björke Agreement cut across the Dual Alliance and must be repudiated, the next stage was the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 which constituted the Triple Entente.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FIRST TOUR IN INDIA

AN agreeable interlude now awaited the Prince and Princess of Wales; for long they had been anxious to visit India, and the project met with no sort of opposition from the King. His own experience in this respect had been different. Mr. Gladstone, just before leaving office in 1874, had recommended that the Prince of Wales should be appointed to the Indian Council in London, a suggestion which the Queen unhesitatingly vetoed. A year later Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State, wrote: "The Council think that it [*i.e.* a visit from the Prince of Wales] will have a highly beneficial influence upon the minds of Your Majesty's subjects in that country generally, and on the feudatory princes of Your Majesty's Empire in particular"; to this it was a little difficult to turn a deaf ear, but the Queen wrote to her eldest daughter of the project as "quite against my desire". The Queen's hesitation was partly due to her constant fear for her son's safety,<sup>1</sup> and partly as to difficulties which might possibly arise in respect to relations in which the Prince would stand in relation to the Viceroy. The latter point became a subject of acute con-

<sup>1</sup> This trait contrasts curiously but characteristically with the Queen's total disregard of danger for herself.

troversy, but a compromise was reached at the suggestion of Captain Baring, afterwards famous as Lord Cromer, who was at that time the Viceroy's private secretary. To her maternal solicitude the Queen gave vent by urging on her son, before she definitely allowed him to start, to be careful as to what he ate, to observe Sundays, and if possible to go to bed at 10 o'clock each evening.

No sooner was the Coronation Durbar concluded than the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, wrote asking when the Prince and Princess of Wales could pay their promised visit to India, but suggesting that the visit might be postponed to 1904, so as to allow an interval after the great ceremonies of 1902. "The native chiefs", the King wrote to Lord Curzon, "have doubtless been put to considerable expense this year, and as my son and his wife would naturally have to pay visits to the most important ones, it would cause a great drain on their resources, and you are, I know, most properly anxious that they should not be too prolific in the spending of money on ceremonials". Domestic circumstances, however, forbade a visit in the winter of 1904, and it was not until November 9, 1905, that the Prince and Princess landed in Bombay, to be received by the outgoing Viceroy, Lord Curzon, and by Lord Lamington, Governor of Bombay, whose guests they had been at Queensland five years earlier.

Just before the arrival of the Prince and Princess, the problem labelled "Dual Control" had been solved and settled; a battle-royal had been fought between the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief with the India Office as referee. The Commander-in-Chief's case had crystallised into



a claim that in all military affairs he should have direct access to—and the last word with—the Viceroy, and that his proposals should not run the chance of being shelved by a middleman, who was really a rival official, or of being minuted on by some junior officer who happened to be in that official's department. Minutes and memoranda flowed backwards and forwards, and a Committee convened by the Indian Secretary had reported that the throttling system of dual control should be arrested and that strictly military portions of Army administration should be under the exclusive control of the man responsible for the efficiency of the Army.

Lord Curzon's recent resignation of the high office in which he had so greatly distinguished himself had been due, not to the main ruling of the Home Government, but to their refusal to appoint his nominee to the new post of Supply Member. The Prince of Wales knew, of course, that the King had been much exercised over the whole matter, and had expressed his entire approval of the finding of the India Council, and that Sir Douglas Haig, then Inspector-General of Cavalry in India, had written: "We soldiers certainly owe the King a great deal of gratitude for the important share he has taken in bringing about this satisfactory change."

It only fell to the Prince of Wales to say "Ave atque vale" to Lord Curzon and to do all he could to cement a very real friendship between the Commander-in-Chief and the Sovereign's new representative.

From Bombay the Prince and Princess should have gone to Ajmere, but famine and plague had been heavy-handed

in those districts; the Royal party must proceed direct to Indore, which they reached on the 16th. To meet them there was the youthful Maharaja of Holkar, gorgeous in scarlet and gold, with the Begum of Bhopal, who looked like a little bundle of lilac silk crowned with diamonds, the position of her eyes indicated by two holes veiled with gauze. Fifty-three chiefs of Central India, who made up a fine blaze of colours, had come to say loyal words to the King-Emperor's son, one of them being, and evidently wishing to be, particularly conspicuous with a golden diadem modelled after that of the Tsar of Russia. Difficulties of language notwithstanding, the Princess contrived, as perhaps she only could contrive, to hold animated, if indirect, conversation with the Begum.

At Udaipur, three days later, was the Maharana, a fine old crusted Tory, noted for his hatred of innovations, who had been barely persuaded to tolerate railways and telegraphs, and had insisted that anyhow the accursed things should end sufficiently far from his palace to ensure for any visitor a somewhat lengthy drive. But his guests once arrived, the stern, pious old gentleman made a delightful host, and the Prince took the opportunity to go out after a panther, returning, however, with a bag of four pigs, one small deer, and three hyenas.

As an Oriental "turn" it would have been difficult to see anything more striking than the spectacle which presented itself on the road from the railway to the Residency at Jaipur, every yard of which was lined with troops and retainers on foot, on horseback, on camels and elephants, while every shade of colour was represented. The smart

regiment of Deolis, with their scarlet coats and white spats, and orthodox bagpipes and drums, was in agreeable contrast to the half-naked Nagas, their dark skins and long black hair set off by the brilliancy of their scanty crimson and emerald green vests, as, brandishing mediæval swords, they did a war-dance by "reliefs" in front of the Prince and Princess. With the Maharaja visits were exchanged with due propriety, and in the great Durbar Hall, host and guest of honour occupied two golden chairs of state under a great silver canopy, while the Princess, garlanded with flowers something like Perdita in the woodland scene, viewed the show from a gallery.

From Jaipur there followed a very dusty desert journey to Bikanir, where the party debouched on to a tiny station in festal ferment, and where there was drawn up as a guard of honour the celebrated Camel Corps, lean, sturdy, curly-bearded Rajputs, bearing the medals of two campaigns. Here the Maharaja was a well-groomed young gentleman, with a faultless English accent, an English vocabulary which never failed and a manner which betokened his breeding; yet at the inevitable reception he could point to a row of cavaliers, stiff with mail coats, their faces covered with visors which flashed in the sun, who might well have come to life again as crusaders.

A trip to Gujna after grouse, and the Prince and Princess proceeded to Lahore, where the Punjab chiefs had assembled in a veritable city of canvas to tender homage. Each tent was a palace of silk brocade woven with gold and silver threads; the inmates were as magnificent as their tents, and their retainers scarcely less so, while even the

elephants had jewelled cloths. More gorgeous than any was the fourteen-year-old Maharaja of Patiala, then still a pupil at the Aitchison College, who outshone all others in splendour of apparel and multitude of myrmidons, the famous Patiala cavalry, a gem of the Imperial Service troops, being in his train. At the Durbar not a few of the native princes were unwieldy with superfluous flesh and encumbered with the ropes of pearls and strings of diamonds; some waddled up to the Prince's dais, others tottered under the weight of their gold trappings.

At Peshawar,<sup>1</sup> turbaned, bearded, baggy-breeched hill-men salaamed to the Prince; and after driving through the Khyber Pass as far as Lundi Kotal, the Prince and Princess returned to Rawal Pindi.<sup>2</sup> Here, at a great Review on 8th December, when 55,000 men of all arms were present, there was to be illustrated the Commander-in-Chief's new army distribution scheme, the self-contained unit for war being now the division. Each infantry division went by in brigades, presenting a front of nearly 200 yards; the divisional cavalry and horse artillery marched on the outer flanks in mass, the field artillery being in column of batteries. The *Pioneer Mail* was moved to glowing periods:

“One saw a mass of men moving in what may be compared to a forest of bayonets, save where the rifle regiments were placed, and the regimental colours rose

<sup>1</sup> At Peshawar the Prince and Princess would hear that Mr. Balfour's Government had tottered to its fall; a few days later Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was invited to form an administration and offered the portfolios for India and War to Mr. Morley and Mr. Haldane.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Kitchener wrote to Lady Salisbury: “The tour of the Prince and Princess is a great success, and they have made themselves very popular.”

above the helmets and turbans to mark the position of this or that regiment. Squads of scarlet, khaki, or rifle-green moved slowly past, and the impression made by this mass of infantry will long be remembered by all who saw the Review."

The Prince and Princess passed on to the slopes of the Himalayas and Jammu, where a welcome had been organised by General Raja Sir Amar Singh. At Jammu, the Maharaja's winter capital, the Prince pleaded that the *ziapat*, or customary present of fruit and sweetmeats to the value of Rs. 5000, should be converted into food and sweetmeats for the poor.

The decorations at Amritsar, which erred on the side of lavishness, were tempered by a simple motto: "Tell your Parents we are Happy", the terseness of which was in agreeable contrast to the Sikh salutation: "*Wahi-Guru-ji-ka-Khalsa-Sri-Wahi-Guru-ji-ki-Fateh*", surely the longest greeting ever uttered in a single breath!

Delhi and Agra, as well as Gwalior—where Christmas was kept—were warm in greeting, if a little fulsome in compliments, but there was, anyhow, to be a day's tiger-shooting to give a momentary thrill, and for the Princess the congenial task of arranging and presiding over a Christmas tree for the children of the Gwalior Sirdars.

The visit to Calcutta began under difficulties, as the recent partition of Bengal had roused sentiment in that province to boiling-point and there was talk of an organised boycott of the Royal tourists by the native population. So unhappy a happening was, however, averted by the tact



of the Viceroy: Lord Minto, at once a statesman and a soldier, had talked at length and very seriously to Mr. Gandhi, the extremist leader, and secured his active help in hindering any incident likely to stir up racial passions.

The Prince and Princess, of course, found personal friends in the newly-arrived Lord and Lady Minto, and this rendered their visit to Calcutta—where they won golden opinions from every class and colour—no less delightful than successful. To Lord Minto in the years to come it fell to provide largely the closer and wider sympathy between Government and governed in India which the Prince of Wales was quick to see and eager to declare as an urgent need.

A week was spent in Burma—a week which the Princess, for her part, would gladly have extended to a month. Curiously enough, during her long stay in Italy she had never been to Venice, and now Mandalay, the Venice of the East, was to make large appeal to her sense of beauty; while the smiling, prosperous land, where the rival cultures of Hindustan and China blended into an effect as picturesque as bizarre, gave irrefutable proof of the tranquillising effect of British rule.

From Rangoon to Mandalay the Prince and Princess had a 385 miles railway journey. The Burma railways have a metre gauge with carriages rather too wide in proportion, and the train rocks badly at any speed of more than 20 miles an hour. "Nineteen hours for 380 miles!" exclaimed the Prince. "No, no; you must cut the time down by at least half. We are used to 50 miles an hour in England."



This was a command—a law of the Medes and Persians. There were indescribable scenes within the train during the journey, but Mandalay was reached—10 hours ahead of schedule! The Prince and Princess descended looking sadly travel-worn, and the first use to which the Prince put his speech, when he regained it, was to express his opinion of the Burma railways in round terms.<sup>1</sup>

The Royal party arrived at Madras on January 18, and, after visiting Mysore and Hyderabad, were at Benares a month later, whence the Princess made an excursion to Dehra Dun and Mussoorie, while the Prince made a second visit to Gwalior, with shooting intent.

To the disappointment of the Prince, a great shoot in the Terai, which had been most carefully arranged by the Maharaja of Nepal, had to be given up on account of cholera breaking out in the camp, and the Prince must forego what he had been eagerly looking forward to, and rejoin the Princess at Aligarh, where their visit was to be commemorated by the erection and equipment of a School of Science, towards which seven lakhs of rupees had been subscribed by Mahomedans.

At Quetta the last of the Durbars was held in their honour by the Agent of the Governor-General, which was

<sup>1</sup> Another experience of speed occurred in 1921 when the King and Queen visited Jersey, on a very sultry summer day. The island authorities had provided a pilot car to keep the roads clear, and the King, troubled by the dust and annoyed to see a car in front of his, urged his driver to go faster and get ahead. The pilot, finding the King's car gaining upon him, put on more speed, and, though the King further accelerated, the pilot kept his lead to the end. The result was that the Royal car passed all the time-table points a quarter of an hour ahead of time, and many islanders never saw the Royal visitors.

attended by the Khan, and on the 17th of March the Prince and Princess set sail for home from Karachi.<sup>1</sup>

The tour in India may pale in importance and glory beside the great occasion of the Coronation Durbar. But if a certain sameness marked the proceedings at the various places visited, if receptions by local officials and notables, and presentations of loyal Addresses tend to monotony, both Prince and Princess undoubtedly enjoyed to the full what was, anyhow to one of them, a first taste of Oriental pageantry. Everywhere they were received with entire loyalty and hearty goodwill, and the tour of 1905-6, involving much personal and always pleasant intercourse between the Prince and the ruling chiefs, did not a little to pave the way for the triumphs of 1911-12.

A joyous welcome awaited the travellers both at Portsmouth and in London, and the cheering crowds in the streets perhaps voiced the thoughts of the thoughtful. The British Prince, who in due order would rule a huge Empire, had completed a self-appointed task which he had begun five years earlier; he had gone—as was well said—to learn at first-hand something of the conditions of life imposed by history, by race, by creed, by economic forces, by all the things which make men really what they are.

<sup>1</sup>In some farewell words the Prince said: "I can assure you and our other friends in all parts of this great and wonderful land that we leave India with feelings of gratitude and affection. We have seen enough to make India a living reality to us and enough to make us wish we could see more, and to implant for ever in our hearts sympathy and interest in all that affects our fellow-subjects in India of whatever creed or race. . . . In bidding India farewell we can truly say that our visit has been to us an unending and unbroken series of happy and most instructive experiences."

He came back to preach the doctrine<sup>1</sup> that there is no reason why men should fail—as so many so badly fail—to comprehend the varying circumstances in which questions of empire and questions of humanity have to be solved.

As was right and proper, a thanksgiving service for the safe return of the Heir to the Crown was held in the Abbey Church of Westminster, and a striking note of the ceremony was the presence of 250 bluejackets and marines from the *Renown* and *Terrible*, who travelled from Portsmouth to take part in the service, and then tasted of the hospitality of Marlborough House.

At the end of May another commission had to be executed. While in India the Prince of Wales had been told of the betrothal of Princess Ena of Battenberg to the King of Spain, and on his return he was to hear that the necessary change in his cousin's profession of faith had provoked the disapproval of certain groups of perfervid Protestants. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London<sup>2</sup> had rather timidly, and not too happily, brought these murmurings to the ears of the King; and the Prince, detecting a rather "got up" case, rejoiced to hear that his father had

<sup>1</sup> At the Guildhall *déjeuner* on May 17th, in the course of his speech the Prince of Wales said very pointedly: ". . . I cannot help thinking, from all I have heard and seen, that the task of governing India will be made the easier if we on our part infuse into it a wider element of sympathy. I will venture to predict that to such sympathy there will be an ever abundant and genuine response. May we not also hope for a still fuller measure of trust and confidence in our earnest desire and efforts to promote the well-being and to further the best interests of every class."

<sup>2</sup> The Bishop of London made an appeal to Princess Beatrice, the bride's mother, but, as he said, to her as a devout member of the Church of England rather than as to a Sovereign's daughter.

brushed the foolish protests aside with the simple statement that as the Princess did not come within the terms of the Royal Marriage Act, the Sovereign had neither right nor reason to interfere with her matrimonial arrangements; his "Consent in Council" was a graceful formality rather than a legal necessity.

The Prince and Princess of Wales—accompanied by Prince and Princess Alexander of Teck—made a hot and rather uncomfortable journey, with a night's rest in Paris, to Madrid for the wedding, which took place on the 31st May, and was marked by a dastardly attempt to murder the bridal pair. As they were returning to the Palace from the Church of San Geronimo, an anarchist flung a bomb at the Royal carriage, several soldiers and spectators being killed, while the assassin committed suicide to avoid arrest. The bravery of the bride at once gained for her the intense respect, to deepen quickly into affection, of the Spanish people. Her wedding dress splashed with blood, she appeared quite unmoved, and the only anxiety and emotion she expressed was on behalf of the killed and injured. Indeed, the story—probably apocryphal—ran that the new Queen of Spain appeared more disconcerted when, at the subsequent *goûter*, she found her husband adopted the Continental habit of dipping his bread and butter in his tea. "*Mon ami*," she is said to have exclaimed with dismay, "*tu trempes ta tartine dans ton thé.*"

## CHAPTER X

### THE AUSTRIAN COUP DE MAIN

IN the course of a very brief and very happy holiday in the April of 1908, the Prince was to get into touch with French informed opinion as to how things were “panning out”. Since their marriage the Prince and Princess had spent scarcely more than a couple of days in Paris, and then only *entre deux gares*; now they decided to stay something less than a fortnight there, travelling incognito as Lord and Lady Killarney—and to enjoy their days to the full. The Prince was, of course, willing, and indeed wishful, to see any of the Ministers; the Princess declined overtures from all milliners—this partly because she would withdraw nothing of her patronage from British trade, and partly because lengthy interviews with the great *couturières* would cut across the hours to be devoted to sight-seeing. The so-called Royal Suite was reserved at the Hôtel Bristol—*cette vieille boîte*, as M. Ritz would, and did, contemptuously describe an old-fashioned hotel which King Edward had always patronised, and where Prince George had made a short and rather mournful stay with his parents on their return from Cap Martin sixteen years earlier.

To meet the Prince and Princess at luncheon at the British Embassy the day after their arrival there were in-

vited the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon—the one to return to dazzling prominence in the hour of his country's agony, the other to fade somewhat from view; a call on M. Fallières at the Elysée the same afternoon, to be, of course, immediately returned, and a *déjeuner* at the Elysée three days later, formed the sum of officialdom observed; every other minute was devoted to the absorbing historic and artistic attractions which Paris offers to the intelligent traveller, and of which the heedless visitors so seldom avail themselves. At the races at Auteuil, enjoyable rather for the *coup d'œil* than for the sport, incognito was strictly observed, as also at Chartres, where the Princess went under the delightful guidance of the beautiful Lady Ripon.

The theatre had always been a great source of pleasure to the Princess, far more so than to her husband, but a Paris theatre was almost unknown *terrain* to both of them. Now they would see all that was best at the Comédie and elsewhere, and when French artistes give their best, it is good indeed. At one theatre on the Boulevards a play which was drawing all Paris was considered to be *un peu leste*, and the Princess allowed the Prince to visit it without her, while she enjoyed a more classical entertainment.

To Mrs. Standish, Queen Alexandra's close friend, who was thought to bear her some resemblance, a long visit was paid, as also to Baroness Alphonse de Rothschild, from the windows of whose fine house in the Rue St. Florentin the Prince and Princess could—and did—look long on the scene of Royal martyrdoms. Paris is at once the refuge of exiled Princes and the resort of Princes on journey or holi-



day bent, and no city knows better than Paris how to blend perfect respect with much-desired neglect, and thus to render visits like that of the Prince and Princess of Wales an unqualified success.

To revert to events in Europe, as to which the Prince of Wales had not neglected to gather fresh knowledge in Paris, the Anglo-Russian Agreement was soon to be rudely tested. For a quarter of a century the Ottoman Empire, under the astute Abdul Hamid, had maintained an uneasy equilibrium among the conflicting European policies. Abdul, a recluse, obsessed by fear of assassination, ruled a vast Empire by a system of spies and informers, checks and counter-checks; corruption pervaded every public office, Ministers were both venal and apathetic. Yet the "Unspeakable" managed to keep order in Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia with a handful of troops and with much less cost in blood and money than his "progressive" successors. A rather slipshod Government only wanted to be let alone, had no hankering for "reform" or "progress", nor, unless roused to anger by revolt, any special leaning towards persecution. But opposed to this evangel of *laissez-faire* were virile, aggressive, grasping neighbours; Bulgars, Serbs, and Greeks had all cast their eyes upon Macedonia, whilst behind them loomed the Great Powers, each with claims to "spheres of interest", all with pious counsels anent "reform" upon their lips, all determined that "reforms" should be made at other expense than their own. The Ottoman Government had full responsibility for misgovernment or oppression, but little means to remedy abuses. The

Abdul Hamidian notion of doing as little as possible had this to be said for it;—any Turkish Government which really tried to “reform” would soon have a host of antagonists buzzing around.

The summer meeting between King and Tsar at Reval, June 9, 1908, and the Anglo-Russian *entente*, however, caused rumours among the younger and more impressionable Turks of an impending partition, to which the Reval programme of “reforms” would be a mere mask. The desire was also in the air to imitate the successful “westernisation” policy of Japan, and there ensued a revolt which replaced Abdul Hamid, the cleverest diplomatic tight-rope dancer in Europe, by a clique of youthful zealots, still lacking in administrative experience and capacity, without which any attempt at reform was foredoomed to failure.

The Prince of Wales could now hear from a trustworthy source that the new movement in Turkey was rendering Austria at once uneasy as to the provinces of Bosnia-Herzegovina, occupied by her troops and long considered an integral part of the Hapsburg Empire, and anxious to profit by the temporary disorders of the Ottoman and Russian Empires to settle definitely in her own favour a point she regarded as vital to her interests. Bulgaria, under a Prince as crafty as he was capable, was equally anxious to cast off the last fragment of Ottoman rule. As to King Edward’s tactful treatment of a ruler who was personally little to his taste or liking. Each year King Ferdinand, for whose mother<sup>1</sup> the King had the greatest regard, would suggest, either by letter or orally at Marienbad, that he

<sup>1</sup> Princess Clémentine, daughter of Louis Philippe.



as to Egypt, and between Russia and Turkey as to the Dardanelles. The three Governments might then have guaranteed the territorial integrity of Turkey, granted to the Porte a loan, encouraged this in its reform programme, and have put the Near Eastern problem upon an entirely new footing.

Unfortunately Baron von Aehrenthal, the Austrian Foreign Minister, showed a lack of tact which bordered on clumsiness. A diplomat of the old school, a man of great energy but of narrow views, diplomacy was to him a chess-board for moves and countermoves, for *démarches*, and "conversations", with stage villains discussing the fate of nations with theatrical secrecy. He had no thought for the rising tide of human passion which political actions may invoke, was out of touch with the new currents of political thought which seeks in diplomacy a means of reconciling differences instead of accentuating them. Having been for long Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, he possessed an intimate knowledge of Russia, and had "feelers" in all political circles, but, before leaving his post, had shed much of the popularity he at first enjoyed. Married in middle life to a young wife, he was not satisfied with repenting the misdeeds of his bachelor days, but irritated his friends by urging them to don a white sheet also. Moreover, his counsels to the Tsar of thick-and-thin resistance to all efforts of reform had alienated Liberal elements in Russia, whilst the Tsar's refusal to heed these counsels caused Aehrenthal to despair of the future of the Russian monarchy. "If Louis XVI. had never made concessions he would not have lost his head", was the Ambassa-

dor's warning to the Tsar. Once a staunch supporter of the *Drei Kaiser Bund* he became lukewarm as he beheld the dissolution of the Russian monarchy and the efforts made by courtiers to dyke up the welling waters—with treacle and brimstone. His estimate of Russian conditions was not so very far amiss, only he mistook for the death rattle what was but the beginning of the end.

The Bosnia-Herzegovina negotiations started amiably enough. Count Berchtold, who had succeeded Aehrenthal at the St. Petersburg Embassy, was an intimate friend of the Austrian Foreign Minister and *au courant* with all his views. He had little difficulty in broaching the matter to Count Isvolsky, now Russian Foreign Minister, and the three conspirators met in conclave, not at Buchlau, as is commonly alleged, but at Buchlowitz, the family seat of the Berchtolds in Moravia, from the windows of which the gaunt tower of Buchlau can be seen frowning down upon the adjacent country as in the far-off days when Berchtolds held *jagd-gericht* within its walls.

The Schloss Buchlowitz, a somewhat incongruous mixture of Italian and Gothic, succeeds perhaps in uniting the minimum of comfort with the maximum of pomp; it was here in the great hall, the flickering candlelight of which flashed upon the portraits of the mighty figures of the dead-and-gone Berlin Conference, that the statesmen of Russia and Austria drew up a deed destined to bury deep the Berlin Conference.

Only the three men were present, and only two copies were made of the agreement signed. One was taken by Isvolsky—he never dared to publish it, and its fate is

unknown—the other copy rests in the archives of the Ballhausplatz. The contents of the agreement have been long a subject for speculation and surmise, but the arrangement actually reached was that Austria should annex Bosnia-Herzegovina at an early date, giving compensation to Serbia and agreeing that Russia should have passage through the Dardanelles, alike in war and peace, for her ships of war. This agreement Isvolsky signed.

How far Aehrenthal deliberately meant to lure Isvolsky into a false position at Buchlowitz, how far he found the conditions agreed upon to be impracticable and deliberately cast them aside, will always be a matter of doubt. Isvolsky's own statements have been far from clear, and M. Poincaré, when Prime Minister, found reason to cast doubt upon the Russian Minister's veracity; on the other hand, Berchtold, who was present, thought that Aehrenthal had not kept all too rigidly to his part of the bargain. The fact is indisputable, that Isvolsky put his hand and seal to an agreement by which Russia assented to the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in exchange for a *quid pro quo*, and that he made this bargain in secrecy, without consulting France or England or the other Powers signatory to the Berlin Conference. In doing this he certainly cut the ground from under his own feet when affecting later an attitude of moral indignation at Aehrenthal's high-handedness, and the *rusé*, ruthless Baron may have chuckled to think that the Russian had compromised himself too hopelessly, even in the eyes of his own Allies, to be able to make much of a stand against Austria. In any case Aehrenthal, possessed of an instrument, the publication of which would have



ruined Isvolsky, made no bones about overriding the wishes of the Russian Foreign Minister. Isvolsky had stipulated that he should be given time to prepare Russian opinion, and that the annexation should not take place until Russia's conditions for compensation had been agreed to. A fortnight later Aehrenthal proclaimed the annexation, and left Isvolsky to learn the news from the newspapers.

It was suggested that Germany was at the back of Aehrenthal's high-handedness, whereas, as the Prince of Wales could have heard, Aehrenthal was bitterly resenting the idea of Vienna being thought merely to echo Berlin's voice, a resentment which was to become indelible when the Kaiser, after Agadir, tactlessly alluded to him as a "brilliant second". The Kaiser was probably sincere when he complained that the "fearful stupidity of Aehrenthal has got me into the dilemma of not being able to protect and support our friends the Turks, as it is my Ally who has wronged them". But he agreed with Bülow that loyalty to Austria paid "from the point of view not only of morals, but of expediency". However displeasing to Berlin to find that Vienna had a will of her own and meant to exercise it, her own interests were too closely bound up with those of her Ally for her to show publicly any lukewarmness in backing up this Ally's cause.

Given the existing tension between England and France and Germany, it is, however, scarcely surprising that there was a tendency to see a Teutonic cloven hoof in every untoward diplomatic event, and the secrecy shown by Aehrenthal in bringing off his coup was peculiarly irritating to King Edward, and scarcely less so to the Prince

of Wales, who was perhaps more keenly alive than his father to the incompetence—to use no harsher word—of the Austrian Ambassador, Count Mensdorff. The King, accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, had visited the Emperor of Austria at Ischl shortly before, and in the midst of a pleasant and apparently frank discussion of the international situation, neither the Emperor nor Aehrenthal had breathed any hint of the drastic measures pending. A suggestion that Austria should endeavour to enlighten Germany as to the dangers of Anglo-German naval rivalry had been somewhat coolly received, Aehrenthal being suspicious that this meant an effort to attract Austria from her Allies. The announcement of the annexation, and the proclamation by Ferdinand of Bulgaria of his independence, came as a bolt from a clear sky, and left England and France alike alarmed and indignant and apprehensive as to the effect of the crisis on Russia. Great was the repercussion in the Tsarist monarchy; Isvolsky had rightly urged for time to prepare Russian opinion and for something tangible to offer. It was Aehrenthal's method perhaps, rather than the annexation itself, which irritated Russia and infuriated Russia's *protégé* Serbia, who had fondly dreamed of the province as part of a Great Serbia.

A speech delivered in the Skuptschina early in 1909, to the effect that the liberties of the Balkan peoples could only be safeguarded if Austria ceased to be a Balkan Power, was followed by a German intimation that if Serbia, relying on Russian help, seriously threatened to invade Bosnia, Germany would lend Austria a hand in repressing Serbia. The diplomatic struggle was prolonged through the spring of

1909, and there was to emerge the fact that the browbeating tactics which Count Metternich employed made no impression whatever on Sir Edward Grey. On March 31 Mr. Asquith reported to the King—then at Biarritz—that Aehrenthal agreed “if we could concur in the terms of the Note, which it was proposed that Serbia should send to Austria, he would not ask for any such promise from us (as has been, with the assistance of Germany, extracted from Russia) for the recognition of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, until mediation with Serbia had been tried and had either succeeded or failed”.

Austria was to accept the Serbian answer to her Note: the Great Powers signatory to the Treaty of Berlin recognised the annexation, and the Kaiser pretended—in a letter to the Tsar on 8th May—that he and his fellow-Sovereign had preserved the peace of Europe. Aehrenthal was raised to the rank of Count for his part in the proceedings; but at Marienbad King Edward, despite the appeals of his Austrian friends, Slatin Pasha and Prince Kinsky, declined to congratulate the man who had nearly caused a European war.

## CHAPTER XI

### ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE

SUCH had been the trend of happenings in Europe which the Prince of Wales had watched with keen observation and a more than common knowledge of men and affairs. The moment was at hand when he would enter on his own great emprise and, before long, play no small part in the drama which was to have all the world for an audience and will have all posterity for its critic.

A cold, somewhat imprudently contracted at Sandringham on the last day of April 1910, and neglected so as not to disappoint friends in London, was to set an abrupt term to a beneficent life and a wise reign. King Edward was strict to maintain the Victorian tradition that the ailments of Royal personages should as far as possible be veiled from the public: the Prince Consort was only allowed to be suffering from a feverish cold when Death was setting a cold finger on his brow. Queen Victoria's condition, according to the *communiqué*, was only "causing some anxiety" when the physicians had recognised her recovery to be hopeless. But when on the 5th May the Prince of Wales drove to Victoria Station to explain to Queen Alexandra, who had travelled night and day from Corfu, why the King was not there to greet her, he knew the labours to which a kindly

Sovereign had devoted himself with heart and brain were over, and that within a few days or hours the labourer would surely be at rest.

The funeral took place on Friday, May 20. Soon after 9. A. M. the Sovereign's procession left Buckingham Palace for Westminster Hall, where King Edward's body had lain in state since the day before. On either side of the new King rode the German Emperor and the Duke of Connaught, and they were succeeded by a *cortège* of forty-eight Royal personages forming a group of reigning monarchs and princes such as probably had never been brought together before in history, and whose important lives were an agonising care for the police. Following the suite there came a procession of nine State carriages, the first containing the Queen-Mother, with her daughters and the Empress Marie of Russia; in the second carriage was the Queen, with her two sons and the Queen of Norway. Queen Alexandra, in her deep sorrow, was leaning just then very largely on her favourite sister for comfort and support, and the precedence now accorded to the Empress was of a piece with the delicate consideration which the Queen Consort was to show in the forthcoming weeks for her bereaved mother-in-law. The only point on which Queen Mary would gently insist was that the conversations, on State and domestic matters, between Queen Alexandra and her son should be in strict *tête-à-tête*.

It was a beautiful May morning when the King, with his uncles and cousins, entered Westminster Hall to join the Primate in quiet prayer. The Archbishop, his chaplain bearing a gold cross before him, came out immediately in front

of the coffin, which, wrapped in the Royal Standard, was placed on the gun-carriage which had served a like purpose at Queen Victoria's funeral. The funeral procession re-formed, moved off to Paddington Station headed by bands of the Household Cavalry, and followed by a great body of troops representing all branches of both the services, deputations of officers from foreign armies and navies, and famous officers such as Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener and Lord Fisher. This aspect of the funeral was not altogether approved in some Liberal circles: it was complained that neither the Ministry nor the Houses of Parliament had any part in the procession, and that the whole thing savoured too much of a military ceremonial, which, the *Nation* sourly observed, was unfortunate in view of King Edward's historic title as *The Peacemaker*.

From Windsor Station bluejackets drew the gun-carriage to St. George's Chapel, the Royal personages and other representatives of foreign States following on foot. Only one carriage was in the procession containing the Queen-Mother and the Empress Marie, and in the chapel the King walked with Queen Alexandra, the German Emperor escorting her sister: Queen Mary was determined that to her mother-in-law should be assigned all the honours of the occasion. At the end of the service, which was conducted by the two Archbishops, the King entertained the Sovereigns, Princes and Ambassadors to luncheon in the Castle. The Kaiser seized the opportunity to take the French Ambassador aside, and—with the King's food scarcely out of his throat and the King's wine scarcely dry on his lips—made a sinister suggestion to him as to the possibility of France siding with Ger-



many in the eventuality of Germany finding herself opposed to England, a suggestion which the Ambassador diplomatically affected to misunderstand.

A year later the German Emperor would come again to London to assist at the unveiling of the Queen Victoria Memorial, which Queen Victoria's eldest son, half in jest, half in earnest, declared he would never live to see. Whether King Edward, from an artistic point of view, would have finally approved the effigy is an open question; the statuary has met with no fewer critics than champions, but there have been many to suggest that Queen Victoria is appropriately represented as turning her back on the Palace which, through fifty years, she was always so reluctant to enter and so eager to leave. With the Emperor there now came the Empress and their only daughter, with many attendants. At Buckingham Palace there was a semi-official dinner party and a State ball; a command performance of a rather cumbersome play, with the usual rather ineffective star cast, was given at Drury Lane; a luncheon was offered by Lord Haldane and a garden party by Lady Londesborough, on both of which occasions the War Lord sought, but sought in vain, to ingratiate himself with Lord Kitchener. All honours were paid to the Imperial guests; but Queen Alexandra very tactfully, but no means unwillingly, left London, after a formal greeting, to pay a visit to Lord Howe <sup>1</sup> in Buckinghamshire. The Queen-Mother's widowhood offered at least one compensation: she need no longer mask her intense and, from

<sup>1</sup> Earl Howe, Lord Chamberlain to Queen Alexandra.

patriotic no less than personal reasons, wholly justifiable dislike of the Kaiser.

The unveiling itself took place on May 16, when the King and Queen, with their Imperial visitors, walked from the Palace to the foot of the Memorial to take part in a brief dedicatory service conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, of which the music was finely rendered by the choirs of the Royal Chapels of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. The Kaiser deposited a gigantic wreath before the Memorial; the sculptor, Mr. Brock, was presented to the King, who called him back, asked for a sword and knighted him. In his reply to an address read by the Chairman of the Memorial Committee, the King paid a finely worded tribute to the greatness of England's greatest Queen, and then passed on to lay emphasis on the presence of the Kaiser and on the "strong and living ties of kinship and friendship" between the thrones and persons of the two Sovereigns; it was hoped that the visit—with the cordial reception which had admittedly delighted the Emperor—would initiate a definite improvement in Anglo-German relations. The hope was premature. Within a year the ties of kinship were to wither into dust and the ties of friendship were to be irreparably broken; the next proposal of a visit from the Kaiser would not occur until an exuberant Minister was bold to suggest that the man responsible for the War and all its miseries should be brought to England as a prisoner of war and tried for his life by some great tribunal.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE KING AND THE LAW

IT is a curious fact that the more "sober and righteous" be the life of a public man, the more certain it is that some malevolent people will try somehow to attach to him some moral failing. General Gordon, the immortal hero of Khartoum—so ran an odious whisper—was addicted to the brandy bottle; Mr. Gladstone—so it was vulgarly suggested—pursued methods associated with the *vieux marcheur*; of a famous statesman it was even murmured that he purloined the silver spoons when he dined out. No reproach, it would seem, is too ridiculous or too atrocious to adduce if the thrower of mud is determined that some mud shall stick to an honourable figure. Whatever else history may say, history can never challenge the fact that, no less than Charles I. or Louis XVI., George V. has carried the "lily of a blameless life"; from the first he has belied the chorale chanted at his baptism; no youth, "sprightly" or otherwise, has ever been less "enslaved by vice and folly". From early boyhood his home has been, as to his last hour it will be, the sum and centre of his personal happiness, the safeguard of his moral life and the school of his religion. Yet before he had been seated a year on the throne King George was to stand for-

ward and stamp into dust a vile slander before it should pass from one foul lip to another.

One Edward Mylius was charged on the 1st of February before the Lord Chief Justice with having uttered a gross and odious libel. In a leaflet published in Paris, Mylius was responsible for the dictum that the King had contracted at Malta in 1890 a marriage with the daughter of a distinguished admiral. The defendant was not represented by counsel, probably because no gold, even if Mylius had any, would tempt any counsel to formulate a defence of so preposterous a slander. The so-called justification offered by the miscreant himself was at once so clumsy and so flimsy that the case almost—but not quite—ceased to be offensive because it was so entirely ludicrous. A long day's sitting and eight columns in *The Times* were devoted to the nauseous story: the jury, however, took rather less than a minute to record their verdict, and the general feeling was that twelve hours in a horse-pond would have been a more suitable punishment than the twelve months in a prison which the judge stated to be the maximum punishment he could inflict. When the prisoner had been removed, the Attorney-General rose in his place and said: "I am authorised by His Majesty to state publicly that he was never married except to the Queen and that he never went through any marriage ceremony except with the Queen."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Two hundred and fifty years earlier Charles II. publicly pledged and solemnly placed on record his Royal word that there was no truth in the allegation that he had gone through a marriage ceremony with Lucy Waters. The very slender evidence here rested on a letter from the Princess of Orange in which occurs the sentence: "Your wife desires me to present her humble duty to you which is all she can say. I tell her 'tis because she thinks of another husband, and does not follow your example of being as constant a wife as you are a husband:

King Edward as Prince of Wales had twice suffered himself to be subpoenaed in law suits, believing that his evidence would assist to clear individuals, who claimed his friendship, of charges made against them. In the matter of the ineffable Mylius, the Attorney-General thought it well to state that the King would have attended to give evidence himself had he not received advice from the Law Officers of the Crown that it would have been unconstitutional for him to do so.

If only troubles of State which were just then beginning to thicken could have been disposed of as easily as was this grotesque calumny, the years ahead would have had a very different, and a far serener, story to tell.

'tis a frailty they say is given to the sex: therefore you will pardon her I hope." The tone and tenor of such an extract would compel the conclusion that the terms "wife" and "husband" are no other than euphemisms.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PARLIAMENT BILL

THERE have been monarchs who have been allowed to set out on a quiet sea and have succeeded in churning the waters into a storm, but never has a peace-loving sovereign been sucked into such a swirl of political controversy, so involuntarily and, in a sense, so helplessly as was George V. in the very first years of his reign. King Edward had died scarcely less distressed by the political controversies which had raged up to, and beyond, his palace doors than by the malady which exhausted his bodily frame; he had bequeathed to his son a heritage which, for the moment at any rate, was splendid rather than enjoyable. The Empress Catherine once reminded the philosopher Diderot that it is a dangerous thing to write reform on so delicate and ticklish a parchment as the skin of a nation. The House of Lords may have been composed of fairly tough material, but the King, whose knowledge of English history was the reverse of superficial, was well aware that to traverse traditional privileges and prestige is almost certain to prove a rather perilous journey. The Prime Minister and the Government of the day had resolved to introduce a fundamental change in the relations between the two Houses of Parliament by definitely subordinating the House of Lords as a Legislative



Chamber to the House of Commons. Seventeen years earlier Mr. Gladstone—by whose coffin the King, as Duke of York, was to walk from Westminster Hall to Westminster Abbey—had, in his Parliamentary swan-song, struck a note which had never ceased to vibrate in the ears of his disciples. The subject happened to be only a Bill for parish councils, with which the Upper House had dealt somewhat roughly before sending it back. The Government had accepted the amendments, but their leader was to sound something like a trumpet-call of defiance to the Hereditary Chamber. “We are compelled”, he said in his gravest tones, “to accompany that acceptance with the sorrowful declaration that the differences, not of a temporary or casual nature merely, but differences of conviction, differences of prepossession, differences of mental habit and differences of fundamental tendency between the House of Lords and the House of Commons appear to have reached a development such as to create a state of things of which we are compelled to say that, in our judgment, it cannot continue. The issue that is raised between a Deliberative Assembly, elected by the votes of more than six million people, and a Deliberative Assembly occupied by many men of virtue, many men of talent—of course with considerable diversities and varieties—is a controversy which when once raised must go forward to an issue.” Against the Prime Minister and the Government now stood, not only the House of Lords itself, but an able Opposition in the House of Commons reinforced by the prestige of Society and long tradition. While the Prime Minister and the Government could not hope to carry their point without the co-operation of the King, the House of Lords and the

Opposition, failing the active sympathy of the King, must fail in their defence. It became a fight for the possession of the Sovereign scarcely less than in some of the Civil Wars. A perverse and ironical fate sometimes appears to choose very oddly the holders of central and balancing positions; there have been occasions when men, who seemingly have difficulty in deciding on which foot to start their daily walk, have been called upon to decide irrevocably, by an inclination this way or that, the course of history for an age. Again, there have been times when it would seem that by a providential decree the authority was precisely matched with the opportunity. Would an Edward I. or an Oliver Cromwell have fitted into the British Constitution of the moment? History may possibly suggest in clear terms that in the monarch of the moment was found the man peculiarly fitted for a task of peculiar complexity. Mr. Gladstone once sketched for private information a character of the Prince Consort which throws a sidelight on any appreciation of the Prince Consort's grandson. "He did not fascinate or command or attract me through any medium but that of judgment and conscience. There was, I think, a want of freedom, nature and movement in his demeanour, due partly to a faculty and habit of reflection that never intermitted, partly to an inexorable watchfulness over all he did and said which produced something that was related to stillness and chillness in his manner which was, notwithstanding, frank and kind." His bitterest enemy, if he ever had one, could by no stretch of imagination charge King George with "want of freedom, nature and movement", but the "stillness and chillness", which, if he had not inherited, he was able to assume, may

have done much to clarify his vision just when clearness of view was a matter of utmost moment. The King's training for the Throne did not begin until he was nearly 30, but that training may have conspired with his character to dispose him to exercise the last prerogative of the Crown which has been left by the Constitution to the more or less independent judgment of the Sovereign—the creation of honours, and especially of peerages, with the advice only of the responsible Minister at his elbow. "The situation", wrote Lord Morley, "forced the position of the Crown into agitating and dangerous prominence, and the prominence naturally inflamed resentment against the Government and sympathetic concern for the young Sovereign". The plea of the "young Sovereign", which was proffered more than once, was curiously inept, and Lord Rosebery, a little later on, made a would-be pathetic, but for once not very happy, allusion to a "young and inexperienced King". A man of 46, as the King was before the Parliament Bill passed, could scarcely be described, even by a romanticist, as still youthful, and to charge him with inexperience was unwittingly to cast a slur on his steady training for the exalted position to which for eighteen years he was the Heir-Apparent.

The story of the Parliament Bill had its roots in 1909, if not earlier. In that year the House of Lords threw out Mr. Lloyd George's Finance Bill, which Fate had even then decided should, after violent oscillations, be put on the Statute Book, and thence, in a few brief years, be quietly consigned to the scrap-heap by a Government of which its author was the head. If only the Lords could have foreseen! Yes, if only the King could have foreseen! But if human eye

could always pierce the future there would be no further room for human adventure. The Lords "damned the consequences", and Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, appealed to the electorate to damn the Lords. "We shall demand authority from the electorate", he said, "to place upon the Statute Book the recognition explicit and complete of the settled doctrine of our Constitution that it is beyond the province of the House of Lords to meddle in any way, to any degree, or from any purpose with our national finance. The House of Lords has hurried on a larger issue still. We shall not assume office and we shall not hold office unless we can secure the safeguards which experience shows us to be necessary for the legislative utility and honour of the party of progress. Here again what is to be done is to be done by Act of Parliament. . . . The absolute veto of the House of Lords must go. The powers which it claims of compelling us to choose between dissolution and legislative sterility must go also. The people in future when they elect a new House of Commons must be able to feel that they are sending to Westminster men who will have the power not merely of proposing and debating, but of making laws. The will of the people as deliberately expressed by their elected representatives must, within the limits of the lifetime of a single Parliament, be made 'effective'". The *ipsissima verba* of the speech are important because the speech was often trotted out to justify a widely prevalent legend that the Government, since they remained in office, had extracted guarantees from King Edward that he would create sufficient Peers to carry their legislation through the House of Lords. This legend Mr. Asquith always warmly disclaimed. King Ed-

ward may have been stretched on a rack of anxiety, but no word escaped his lips which could be construed into any sort of a pledge; nor, to do him justice, is there any ground for supposing that the Prime Minister had at the time asked for any definite guarantee.

In the General Election of January 1910 the pendulum had swung over a little way, and the Government's majority was reduced from 354 to 124. So, just as the eyes of servants look unto the eyes of their master and the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, must the Liberals look to the Irish Nationalists if they wanted to get any measure on to the Statute Book. According to the terms of the Parliament Bill, if a Bill were to pass the House of Commons in three Sessions within two years, it must receive the Royal assent despite its rejection by the House of Lords. But as King Edward had given no guarantee of any contingent creation of peers, the Government were in no better position than before in regard to their ability to force their measure through the Upper House. The predicament was awkward, and the Prime Minister was constrained to say, "If we do not find ourselves in a position to ensure that statutory effect will be given to this policy in this Parliament, we shall then either resign our offices or recommend a dissolution of Parliament. In no case would we recommend a dissolution except in such conditions as will secure that in the new Parliament the judgment of the people as expressed in the election will be carried into law." This was the political position when King Edward died.

King George was probably possessed of a much closer and deeper knowledge of the subject at issue than could be



traced to his father. If his acquaintance with men was very much less, his knowledge of matter was very much larger. He had diligently studied the Veto debates in the House of Commons, he had read pretty well all there was to be read which would throw light on a great difficulty he knew to be impending, and the quiet evenings under his own roof in which he delighted had given him ample time for careful thought; the controversy in all its bearings was to a considerable extent an open book to him. He at once suggested—the suggestion was perhaps not far to seek—that representatives of the Government and of the Opposition should set themselves to negotiate a settlement in conference; the conference met twenty-one times at No. 10 Downing Street, and twenty-one times had to register a failure to come to any agreement. Mr. Asquith must therefore remind himself of the very precise pledge he had given to his followers at the close of the last reign, that he would not recommend a dissolution “except under such conditions as will secure that in the new Parliament the judgment of the people as expressed in the election will be carried into law”. The Prime Minister was then invited to place himself in close communication with the King, and the day after the breakdown of the Conference repaired to Sandringham for a long, and repeated, interview. Lord Stamfordham, who was certainly without the political bias freely, but falsely, attributed to Lord Knollys,<sup>1</sup> was then for two or three days in daily, and almost hourly, touch with Downing Street; but the King, wishing to do anything to ease matters,

<sup>1</sup>For some months Lord Knollys and Lord Stamfordham acted as joint private secretaries.



journeyed to London to be on the spot to receive Mr. Asquith and Lord Crewe. The upshot of these interviews and communications was that Mr. Asquith could satisfy himself that if the electorate should endorse the Parliament Bill, new peers would be forthcoming to carry it into law. It subsequently transpired that two conditions had been agreed upon between the King and his advisers: (1) that before a dissolution the House of Lords should have an opportunity of debating the Parliament Bill and laying before the country an alternative policy; and (2) that the Royal prerogative should not be invoked unless the Government should receive "an adequate majority" from the electorate for the special purpose to hand. The "adequate majority" remained for the public an unknown quantity, but Lord Rosebery became responsible for the dictum that if the Government had lost but five seats, the contingent promise of a creation of peers would automatically lapse. Hurried arrangements were made to satisfy the first of the two conditions, and although the Parliament Bill had only been read once in the House of Commons, Lord Crewe told the House of Lords that they would be given an immediate opportunity of voting upon its second reading so that they might simultaneously produce an alternative policy before the impending dissolution. The Lords, however, were moved to adopt, on November 12, Lord Rosebery's resolution, that their House should in future consist of Lords of Parliament (1) chosen by the whole body of Hereditary Peers from among themselves and as nominees of the Crown; (2) as sitting by virtue of office or qualifications; and (3) as chosen from outside. Ten days later Lord Crewe, moving

the second reading of the Parliament Bill, peremptorily refused to accept any amendments, the Government apparently fearing that the existing favourable electoral situation might be bedevilled by long-drawn-out discussions or by any postponement of the appeal to the country. The debate of which Lord Lansdowne moved the adjournment was, as a matter of fact, never resumed in that Parliament. Assuming the existence of Lord Rosebery's reformed House of Lords, Lord Lansdowne's prescription provided for the settlement of differences between the two Houses by conferences and resort to the referendum. The House of Lords adopted this plan, but the Government treated it with curled lip and insisted on their own more drastic policy. "Our dove of peace has been returned to us cooked", Lord Rosebery said, "served up with its olive branch." The Lords in their turn refused to discuss the Parliament Bill. The short Parliament of 1910 was dissolved on November 28, and a fierce political contest resulted in a position of "as you were", the Liberal, Labour and Irish Nationalists majority for the Government being 126; as regards Great Britain alone, the Government majority over the Opposition was only 60. Thus there would be no reduction of the Government strength, and the condition of an "adequate majority" had been complied with.

The year of mourning for King Edward was to be rigidly kept: the King and Queen visited no theatre, attended no entertainment, and, despite Queen Mary's pronounced dislike for black, suffered no person to come into their presence unless garbed in that hue. This mark of sorrow and respect for a great monarch and a beloved father having

been faithfully observed, mourning at Court, alike in colour and conduct, was henceforth to be restricted to the shortest period compatible with the occasion. Both King and Queen held that their family griefs, and more especially Royal demises abroad, must not interfere with popular arrangements and social fixtures more than was absolutely necessary. A complete reversal of Queen Victoria's melancholy methods was thus established, and even the death of the Queen-Mother—in the golden sunset of a long and lovely life—and of Prince John—the son who was scarcely expected to grow up to manhood—were outwardly mourned for no longer than strict etiquette prescribed. But Queen Mary, in the first few months of her queenly dignities, was to submit to a real sorrow in the loss of her second brother, the very gallant and attractive Prince Francis of Teck, who had inherited in high degree some of the special attributes of his mother, and who served as a valuable link between his august relatives and certain social strata with which they were not very familiar. The King, as chief mourner at the funeral, walked from Windsor Station to St. George's Chapel, escorted by the Royal Horse Guards dismounted, a procedure which was said to establish the privilege of the Household Cavalry to attend immediately the Person of the Sovereign whether mounted or dismounted. For once Queen Mary's usually calm demeanour forsook her, and in St. George's Chapel she gave evidence of the keenness of her sorrow for a brother who had died as bravely as he had lived.

Just seventeen years later the King was again to be chief mourner at the funeral of his Consort's eldest brother, the Marquis of Cambridge, who had served with distinction,

alike in the South African campaign and in the Great War, and had afterwards established himself, with happiest results, on the lines of a country gentleman of the old order in Shropshire. Thereafter there only remained of Queen Mary's three brothers the youngest, who as a child had been the constant companion of her girlhood, whose military merits were admittedly conspicuous, and whose appointment as Governor-General of South Africa was to meet with supreme success.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CORONATION

THE first State ceremony performed by King George was the opening of the new Parliament in February 1911, a Parliament which was to witness and to bear its part in calamities and glories unparalleled in British history, and was not to be dissolved until the end of 1918 when a new world was struggling to rise from the chaos of war. Mr. Asquith reintroduced his Parliament Bill, which the House of Commons read the second time, and in due course Lord Morley moved its second reading in the House of Lords. The date—May 29—on which the proposal was made, more than any arguments in support of it, induced the House of Lords to accept it, for the Coronation was now close at hand. A second reading without a division produced what was so much desired, the appearance of national unity on the occasion of the great ceremony. No one of course was really deceived. Indeed the apathy of the public in regard to the constitutional revolution was at the moment rather fretfully descanted on by the more ardent Unionist protagonists, and the King himself just now may have been half amused and half annoyed by a social event dubbed in *The Times* newspaper by an indignant peer as a political masquerade. Rumour often proves herself a lying jade, but

rumour had it that the signatory to the expostulation was no other than Lord Rosebery. The suggestion was probably offered because it was known that to Lord Rosebery, standing aloof from party politics and wholly free from party heat, the King would turn for counsel which he knew would anyhow be impartial and considered. Lady Rosebery's unrecorded weight—which was anyhow no greater than her worth—was perhaps a theme for speculation in the far-off boyish days at Sandringham; Lord Rosebery's wisdom was certainly a source of strength drawn upon when clouds of difficulty overhung Buckingham Palace.

Two prominent Unionist politicians—Mr. F. E. Smith<sup>1</sup> and Lord Winterton—aided and abetted, so current, if inaccurate, report ran, by Mr. Winston Churchill—gave a fancy dress ball at a West-End hotel, when, among ladies arrayed in every variety of costume from Cleopatra to a ballet-girl, and among elderly lords disguised as Tudor kings, there were to be seen the figures of the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition, their faces wreathed in smiles. Worse still, one high-spirited young politician was observed with the number 499 attached to his tinsel coronet, in delicate allusion to the 500 peers whom the Government was reported to have in view. The occasion, if it mocked at honourable traditions, had at least the merit of suggesting the good humour which so often characterises so-called political crises, and the aristocratic humorist had anyhow been guilty of exaggeration, as not more than 200 peers would be necessary for the Prime Minister's purpose. Their selection would of course be no easy task. About eighty blameless, if

<sup>1</sup> Created Earl of Birkenhead, 1922.



colourless, gentlemen had submitted or suggested, themselves as suitable for promotion. If a few scruples could be swallowed, and overfastidiousness were not displayed, about fifty more "possibles" were said to be under favourable consideration; but to fill up the list presented obstacles which would require no little political agility to overcome. Lord Elibank, however, as Chief Whip in the House of Lords, cheerfully informed the Scottish Whip<sup>1</sup> that the prospective peers were not only plentiful in number but were capable of being so carefully culled that they would do nothing to detract from, possibly something to adorn, the circumstances of the Upper House. For the King this loose talk about the Royal prerogative can have been nothing less than intensely irritating, and not the less so for a monarch whose quick sympathy cannot but have engendered some degree of natural sensitiveness.

Important and showy occasions led up to the great event of June 22. The King and Queen opened the Festival of Empire at the Crystal Palace, they "honoured" Epsom and Ascot Races, they visited Aldershot, although, contrary to expectation, they were not present at a great Costume Shakespeare Ball at the Albert Hall which was rather foolishly labelled as "the most important social function since the Eglinton Tournament of 1839." On the eve of the great day there appeared a huge list of Coronation honours containing upwards of 550 names, peerages, baronetcies, knighthoods and Privy Councillorships being distributed to men of distinction quite independently of any party bias.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Younger, created Viscount Younger of Leckie, 1923.

Not the least popular of the Coronation honours was the Marquisate granted to Lord Crewe, a promotion which had no relation with the fact that the Secretary of State for India was the only member of the Government on terms of personal, as apart from political, friendship with the King.

For three or four days a truce was called to all forms of party strife, so that the people, not only of the capital but of the whole kingdom, could participate at least in spirit in that formal acceptance and recognition of the Sovereign which is a survival from the earliest period of the establishment of kingship. Once more the ancient British monarchy was to be exhibited as the most popular and the most democratic—as in the hours of European stress it proved itself the most stable—among all monarchies.

The great service in the Abbey Church came under the supreme direction of the Duke of Norfolk, who, by his tact, sense of discipline and flair for pageant, was to show that, if in the providential order he had been a “producer” of drama instead of an hereditary Earl-Marshal, he would have achieved unrivalled success. A congregation of some 8000 were waiting in the Abbey when there entered the King’s procession, of which the conspicuous features were the Abbey Cross, borne by the Sacrist and followed by the Prebendaries and the Dean, the officers of the Orders of Knighthood, Heralds, the Standards of the Dominions and India—each borne by an ex-Governor or an ex-Viceroy—of Wales, Ireland, Scotland, England, the Union and the Royal Standard; there followed Knights of the Garter and high Court officials, the Lord Chancellors of Ireland and Eng-

land, and—for the first time in a Coronation—the Prime Minister, whose office had been recognised by Royal Warrant in 1905. Immediately before the Queen, whose train was borne by four Duchesses,<sup>1</sup> there walked the Archbishop of York and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The King himself, in his crimson Robes of State, with the Collar of the Garter and the Cap of Maintenance, his train upheld by Pages of Honour, was followed by the great military and naval officers and personages of his Household, the rear being brought up by the Yeomen of the Guard. The great doors being closed, their Majesties went to the Chairs of State on the south side of the high altar, and the King then came forward in full view of the congregation to be “presented” by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Recognition, a feature dating back to the earliest days of European monarchy. Very far from perfunctory was the full-throated shout of “God save King George” as the Archbishop repeated the formula of presentation at each of the four sides of the dais.

There then ensued the more strictly religious portion of the ceremony, which the King had closely and carefully studied. It was an open secret that he had held earnest consultation with the most eminent spiritual authority as to the religious responsibilities which would devolve on him and as to how he should bear himself, in the days which lay before him, as the Godly Prince of Article 37 who, while not usurping the functions of the sacred ministry, is to restrain those who offend against religious discipline. It

<sup>1</sup>The Duchess of Portland, the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Montrose, the Duchess of Hamilton.

would not be outside his knowledge that the Godly Prince, as defined in the article, was supposed to interpose personally in Church affairs and that English Sovereigns before the Conqueror used the title *Vicarius Christi*. The Sovereign has, *ipso facto*, always been conceived of a *persona mixta*, as partaking of the sacerdotal character attributed in the Old Testament to the Lord's anointed, and there have been many to hold that the Coronation imparts to the crowned monarch an ecclesiastical character of which the distinctly ecclesiastical vestments assumed at the Sacre are an outward sign. If the Austrian Emperors were deacons with the duty of assisting at the Pope's High Mass, the British Sovereign is anyhow the only tenant of office in the British Empire who must of necessity be alike a professing and practising Christian. Nine years earlier King Edward had asked whether it would be possible for himself and his Consort to receive the Blessed Sacrament immediately before rather than in the course of a very ornate and exhausting service, but his enquiry only led him to recognise even more fully than before that the Celebration of the Holy Mysteries is an integral part, if not the central feature, of the sacred ceremony.

The Coronation Oath was to be shorn, for the first time since 1869, of an odious and quite otiose phrase. Besides their oaths to govern according to law and to maintain the Protestant Reformed religion and the Church of England British Sovereigns, ever since William and Mary usurped the throne, have been required to swear and subscribe to two declarations. One of these is to preserve Presbyterian Church government in Scotland, and of this there has never been

any criticism; the other, a miniature monument of offensive verbiage, ran: "The Convocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary and the Sacrifice of the Mass as they are now used in the Churches of Rome are superstitious and idolatrous." Apart from the twentieth-century Catholic trend of the Church of England, the words constituted a wanton insult to thousands upon thousands of British subjects, and were about as much out of date as the thesis that when the Earl-Marshall joins the Sovereign's forces in the field he as such becomes Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup>

Queen Victoria, who reserved her religious animosity for the Ritualists, was always scrupulous, and often a little tender, in what she said and did as regards Roman Catholics. But she was too young and inexperienced at the time of her accession to resent or resist official words put into her mouth. King Edward, to whom it was agony to inflict hurt on any unoffending person, and who detested any admixture of religion with politics, desired earnestly to delete the ugly sentence from his pronouncement; but time was too short then to overcome difficulties which arose, and he had to content himself with letting everyone know how repugnant the words were to him and in uttering them in so low a tone as to be quite inaudible.

With the opening of the new Parliament, steps had been at once taken by the Government to remove a stumbling-block and cause of offence by pointing out that the Protestant Succession is triply fortified by the Bill of Rights, the Act of Settlement, and the Coronation Oaths Act. There

<sup>1</sup>The point was actually brought up by various Dry-as-dusts when the Duke of Norfolk proceeded to South Africa with his battalion of Yeomanry in 1900.



was a good deal of perfervid, if perfunctory, opposition both within and without the House of Commons, and the Royal Declaration Bill did not slip through any of its stages without divisions; but in the House of Lords, where common-sense was reinforced perhaps by a sense of delicacy, the only opponent of the Bill was a peer of a peculiarly Orange complexion. King George was thus enabled to make the necessary Declaration in comparatively inoffensive if rather archaic terms: "I do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify and declare that I am a faithful member of the Protestant Reformed Church by law established in England, and I will, according to the true intent of the enactments which secure the Protestant Succession to the Throne of my Realm, uphold and maintain the said enactments, to the best of my powers, according to law."

After the King had taken the amended Coronation Oath, the power of the Holy Spirit was invoked in the *Veni Creator*; and after the special prayer the anthem *Zadok the Priest* curiously and not too appropriately associated with the rite, was rendered by a combined choir which did the music more than justice. Then, divested of his Robes of State, the King sat on the chair containing the Coronation Stone, with a pall held over his head by four peers who were alike highly-placed and familiar friends, while the Primate solemnly anointed his head, breast and hands. There followed the clothing with the kingly insignia, alike ecclesiastical and civil; and after the *colobium sindonia* and *supertunica*, both of sacerdotal import, had been donned, the golden spurs, emblems of chivalry, were brought from the high altar itself by the Dean to the Lord Chamberlain, who



lightly touched the King's heels with them and then returned them to the altar. The *patlium* or Royal robe (the gorgeous golden garment worn by George IV. at his Coronation) having been assumed, the Archbishop presented the Orb, with the admonition: "When you see the Orb set under the Cross, remember that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer", the Ring and the two Sceptres, "the ensign of kingly power and justice" surmounted with a cross, the "rod of equity and mercy" with a dove. In Russia and in Latin countries the Sovereign crowns himself, a gesture which betrays something of arrogance; in England the successor to St. Augustine crowns the Lord's anointed with the submission that God will grant a crown of glory and righteousness. After Queen Mary had been anointed and crowned, and had made her obeisance as the first subject of the Empire to the King-Emperor, the Abbey Church was hushed from east to west, and the Holy Sacrament was administered in something like awful silence to a King and Queen in all their gorgeous array, but "meekly kneeling on their knees." It was not until 2 P. M.—and many of the officials and invited persons had been in their places before 7. A. M.—that the King and Queen left the Abbey, to receive along a very circuitous route, and again when appearing on the great balcony of the Palace, joyous expressions of loyalty which bore a very genuine ring.

The whole proceeding was better ordered than the ceremony of nine years earlier—which had suffered in many ways from its postponement to the month of August—and this was largely due to the fact that the King, who was

always unwilling to take second best if the best were available, telegraphed early in the year to Lord Kitchener, then on a tour in East Africa, asking him to take command of the troops on the occasion: the accidents, minor delays, and unfortunate hitches which marked what had been the first Coronation for over sixty years, were now carefully avoided; although the orders to the troops—duly submitted for the King's approval—made up a weighty volume of 212 pages, the elaborate arrangements were so smoothly carried out that not a single casualty occurred, and within an hour of the conclusion of the Abbey service the G. O. C. could inform the Sovereign that every military function had been fulfilled and that the troops from every quarter were being cared for. The King, who had in mind the terrible disaster at the ill-starred Coronation in Russia,<sup>1</sup> urged on Kitchener the paramount necessity of affording protection to the crowds. There was some tendency to criticise rather than to appreciate the thoroughness with which the famous soldier carried out his instructions, and which led to the erection of barriers between the side and main streets through which the great *cortège* was to pass, but the crowds proved so enormous that, without any "getting out of hand", they might well have been a danger to themselves. Full justice was finally done to the Sovereign's care for the people who had poured into London to pay him their tribute; not a single accident was reported either that day or on the day

<sup>1</sup> The recent fatal accident to the French War Minister was also probably in mind when a legislative safeguard for Coronation crowds against aviation was hastily provided by a Bill enabling the Home Secretary to prohibit, under heavy penalties, aircraft from passing over certain areas.

following, when the King and Queen proceeded in state to and from the City.

A review of the Fleet, described as the “most formidable ever assembled”, with 18 foreign warships thrown in; a gala performance at the opera; a garden party which was to prove that the gardens at Buckingham Palace can accommodate a good many more than 6000 persons, and a state performance at His Majesty’s Theatre—where almost every prominent actor and actress appeared but were by no means seen at their best—formed the chief items of a momentous event to which crowned heads were not bidden, and which was scarcely adorned by the curious behaviour of the Heir to the Crown of Germany.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE ISSUE OF THE BILL

THE Coronation over, the Parliamentary battle was resumed with sharper zest even than before, and in a couple of weeks the Parliament Bill came out of the Lords' Committee so disfigured as to be almost unrecognised and unrecognisable by its parents. But if mutilated, it was, anyhow, not dead, and if it could only be kept alive the other House might be relied upon to restore it. The Government accordingly accepted the responsibility of moving its third reading, and in its mangled form returned it to the House of Commons. Before the measure arrived there, there was published in the press a letter, dated July 20, over the Prime Minister's signature, addressed to the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Balfour. The allocution produced considerable ferment. "In the circumstances", was the final stinging paragraph, "should the necessity arise, the Government will advise the King to exercise his prerogative to secure the passing into law of the Bill in substantially the same form in which it left the House of Commons, and His Majesty has been pleased to signify that he will consider it his duty to accept and act on this advice."

The letter induced an immediate meeting of peers at Lansdowne House—no room in Westminster being large

enough for the purpose—when Lord Halsbury, strongly backed by the brothers-in-law, Lord Salisbury and Lord Selborne, opposed any surrender, Lord Curzon and the Duke of Devonshire being among the spokesmen to withstand them. The Duke of Devonshire and Lord Salisbury could perhaps claim ties of closer and friendlier acquaintance with the King than any other of the protagonist Lords; each had equally in view the dignity of the Crown and the “pleasure” of the Sovereign, but, typical of the sides they represented, they seemed to have taken diametrically opposite views as to how that dignity and pleasure could best be served. A report was rife that Lord Salisbury, trained as he had been by a paternal master-hand to negotiate all the sharp corners of political thoroughfares, asked for an audience at Buckingham Palace, which with equal courtesy and correctitude was regretfully declined.

Loud groans ran through all the Unionist ranks: when the Prime Minister rose in his place to move that the Lords’ amendment be considered, he was shouted down, but in the din of hisses and cries of “Traitor”—it was not quite clear whom he was supposed to have betrayed—he succeeded in uttering one sentence: “Unless the House of Lords consent to restore this Bill to its original shape, we shall be compelled to invoke the prerogative of the crown.” The leader of the Opposition charged the Government with putting the Crown under compulsion—a suggestion even more offensive to the King than the Government—but the Prime Minister’s threat was recognised to have substance in it. The debate was sufficiently highly-coloured in itself, but an even deeper complexion was given to it by the news, which arrived in the

interval before its last day, that the German Government had sent a cruiser to Agadir; the intimation seemed to cover a determination on the part of the Kaiser to interfere in the partition of Morocco, with which France and Spain were recognised to be concerned.

Lord Lansdowne, now roused and alarmed, begged the Conservative peers to withhold further opposition and so at least to save their House from a wholesale addition to its number. Conservative then began to cross swords with Conservative as to this very disturbing counsel; Lord Newton applied for guidance to Mr. Balfour, to receive the reply: "With Lord Lansdowne I stand, with Lord Lansdowne, if need be, I am ready to fall". Lord Camperdown, in the press, expressed himself ready to vote for the Bill if this were the only means of depriving the Prime Minister of any excuse for calling upon the Crown to execute its bond. Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Walter Long also sounded the retreat, and despite furious talk at a dinner given by the so-called "Die-hards" to Lord Halsbury on the 26th of July, 325 Opposition peers let it be known that they had decided to abstain from any further division on the Bill in the House of Lords. The exigencies of the situation were a prime consideration at the Palace; and without hesitation the King deferred his visit to Goodwood on the 24th in order to receive the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition, and say or do anything that could be said or done to allay the raging political storm. Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour must alike have remembered with gratitude that in an earlier reign consultation with the Sovereign was likely to involve a chilly passage across a choppy sea, or the rigours



of a late autumn journey to the fastnesses of the Highlands.

On that Monday the House of Commons met to deal with the Lords' amendments, and there occurred one of the stormiest and least edifying afternoons in the annals of the Mother of Parliaments, the Prime Minister's attempted sketch of the history of the Bill being frequently and derisively interrupted with "Leave the King out," and, in even more reprehensible taste, "Who killed the King?"

A postponement of the King's visit to Goodwood was thought to be due to a Moroccan rather than a constitutional crisis, and it was murmured that there was something odd about the Grand Fleet going to Portsmouth instead of, as arranged, to Norwegian waters. Nor was it known that Mr. Lloyd George was slightly irresponsible, though wholly admirable, in the note of warning to Germany which he struck at a banquet a few days earlier, when the Lord Mayor convened bankers and merchants to meet the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Peace, he then said, would be an intolerable humiliation if it were at the price of surrendering the great and beneficent position which Britain had won by centuries of heroism and achievement. Mr. George could have made no better reply three years later to the deputation drawn from the same bankers and merchants, who waited on him, just when the Foreign Minister, was drafting his ultimatum, to urge, forsooth, that for the sake of British commerce and financial credit Great Britain must stand aloof from a great struggle between right and wrong.

A Foreign Office Vote, taken just at this time, was to justify to the hilt an appointment which the King had not only approved but had, in a sense, engineered. The Sovereign was fully aware that had King Edward lived he would have accomplished his purpose of sending Lord Kitchener to India as Viceroy; King Edward's death had enabled Lord Morley to impose his veto on the proposal, and the present King was known to lament that a national talent was being folded away in a napkin. The despatch of the *Panther* to Agadir had sharply reminded the Government—however they might disclaim responsibility for Mr. Lloyd George's dictum—that our own footholds might well be strengthened, and that if Berlin could interfere in Morocco at one end of the Mediterranean, we might have something to say in Egypt at the other; there was a crying need for a strong British Agent and Consul-General in Cairo. At one time Lord Cromer had thought that an ex-Sirdar might have too military a complexion for the post, and had frowned on any idea of Kitchener being in the succession to himself; but Lord Cromer had vigilantly and impartially watched his former subordinate's work in South Africa and India, and he now—a supreme witness against his original belief—urged that Kitchener should fill the post which ill-health had compelled Sir Eldon Gorst to vacate. The Sovereign's glad consent was secured before it was asked, and Sir Edward Grey could write in all sincerity: "The King approves very cordially of your going to Cairo, and the arrangement is one which has quite evidently given him much pleasure."

While the Parliament Bill was still in suspense, the Unionist Party was rent by divided counsels and depressed by the results of a couple of bye-elections, and public meetings convened by the "Die-hards", though very noisy, only emphasised the division between the "hedgers" and "ditchers", the names pleasantly given to the two sections of the Unionist Party. Mr. Balfour, on the 2nd August, in a hectic House of Commons, moved a vote of censure on the Government, and embedded in the vote was the question as to the date at which the guarantees were given by the King—the inference being that if this occurred before the general election, the debates on the Bill were an empty sham. The Prime Minister, in his reply, congratulated himself that it was not only with the King's leave but at the King's strong desire he was able to disclose communications hitherto regarded as confidential. He revealed that on the 10th November he had appended to his advice for a dissolution a statement which ran:

"His Majesty's Ministers cannot take the responsibility of advising a dissolution unless they may understand that in the event of the policy of the Government being approved by an adequate majority in the new House of Commons, His Majesty will be ready to exercise his constitutional power, which may involve the prerogative of creating peers, if needed to secure that effect shall be given to the desire of the Government. His Majesty's Ministers are fully alive to the importance of keeping the name of the King out of the sphere of party and electoral controversy. They take upon themselves, as is their duty, the entire and exclusive responsibility for the policy which

they will replace before the electorate. His Majesty will doubtless agree it would be indefensible, in the interests of the State, that any communication of the intention of the Crown should be made public unless and until the actual occasion should arise."

After, among other more or less bitter speeches, Mr. F. E. Smith had suggested that Mr. Asquith's advice to the King had been Mr. Redmond's price for the Budget, and after Lord Hugh Cecil had rather unhappily remarked that a great body of loyal subjects had been hardly treated by the monarchy, the debate closed and the motion was rejected by a majority of 120 votes. The vote of censure was, of course, easily passed in the Lords, but the thermometer ran up to a very unusual point in the debates on the 9th and 10th August. Lord Lansdowne, at all times difficult to excite, calmly rebuked the voluble Lord Willoughby de Broke's suggestion of resistance by force. The King was obviously very unwilling to create a large batch of peers; such a creation, the leader of the Lords urged, would bring our Parliamentary system into contempt, and their Lordships must surely wish to avoid an outrageous affront to the House and the association with it of the Sovereign. For two long evenings, in that usually calm and serene atmosphere, winged words flew about; accusation provoked counter-accusation and argument induced counter-argument, not the least apt of which was one spoken *sotto voce*, that "to pass the measure was to gulp down a nasty pill, whereas the alternative, a wholesale creation of rather ignoble peers, would be to swallow the bloody medicine chest".

The division—in which 37 Unionist peers, 2 Archbishops and 11 Bishops voted with the Government—was taken in intense excitement, and unusual cheering and quite unwonted hissing was heard when the motion “that the House do not insist on the amendment” was carried by a rather unexpected majority of 17. The heat did not die down with the debate: a great territorial magnate, who had felt it his sad duty to vote with the Government, was hooted in the Carlton Club, it was seriously proposed to hang a “black list” of those who had resisted the Die-hards in the provincial Unionist Clubs, and, worst still, a large number of peers, in order to show they were still licking their wounds, and heedless of the wound they might inflict on the Sovereign, avowedly abstained from attendance at the next opening of Parliament.

“His easy, indolent behaviour produced all the effect of the most artful policy; he suffered things to take their course, and if Achitophel had been at one ear and Machiavel at the other, they could have given him no better advice.” So runs the note on Charles II. in reference to the threefold dissolution of Parliament towards the close of his reign. History scarcely presents two more contrasting characters than Charles II. and George V.: it would be difficult to trace a single attribute, quality, appetite or ambition common to them. Yet it is possible to suggest that if Lord Bacon had been at one ear and Lord Chatham at the other, the King could have done nothing wiser or more wary than to let things take their course, his reservation being that, while observing the exact limitation of his constitutional authority, he should surrender no jot or tittle of his kingly dignity.

For Charles II. the safety, honour and welfare of his dominions only concerned him so far as they related to the safety and welfare of himself; his honour was a matter of minor concern. The main concern of King George was that things might be so ordered and settled by the High Court of Parliament assembled under him that peace and happiness, truth and justice, might in time, even if not in his time, be established among his people.

The Sovereign may have put his lips to a bitter draught when he agreed—as constitutionally he was nearly bound to agree—to exercise a prerogative which was urged on him not only by the Government in power, but by the electorate which had deliberately renewed its mandate to that Government. Surely a far more nauseous cup was to be presented to him ten years later when a Prime Minister, who cared nothing for the feelings of the Sovereign, and less than nothing for the prestige of the Upper House, submitted—submission is scarcely the term—such disputable names for peerages that one of the nominees must ask permission to decline the honour after it had been announced in the public press.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE KING'S ANCESTRY

LONDON had feasted fully on pageant, military display and riot of colour; neither Carnarvon, Edinburgh nor Dublin were to go hungry.

Carnarvon was the second of the series, and the investiture of the Prince of Wales was only second to the Coronation as a picturesque as well as genuinely nationalist and democratic function. It was to be the Prince of Wales's day, and the King would grudge him no moment of it, nor an iota of the ceremonial which was to be peculiarly his own.

Landing at Holyhead on the 13th of July, the Prince preceded his parents to the Water Gate of the Castle, where he was received by Mr. Lloyd George, Controller of the Castle, who put forward for the occasion all his irresistible charm of manner and conducted him to the Chamberlain's Tower in a procession which comprised the Arch-Druid and officers of Gorredd, the Welsh Heralds, the Welsh Mayors and Members of Parliament, the Prince being supported by two peers and followed by commanders of Welsh regiments.

The King and Queen with Princess Mary arrived half an hour later. They were escorted first to the Eagle Tower, and thence to the platform between the Black Tower and the Granary Tower where the ceremony was to take place,

and on which three thrones had been placed. The Prince was led to the platform by Garter King-at-Arms, and four Lords chosen to bear the Insignia; and, after making obeisance with boyish grace, knelt at his father's feet to be invested with the Mantle, Sword, Coronet, Ring and Rod. The Prince then repeated with fervour the formula of homage to the King, who kissed him on both cheeks and bade him occupy the third throne.

To the Address presented by the Arch-Druid in his robes and Sir John Rhys, the Prince replied with the hope that he would do his duty. After a brief and rather bewildering religious service, the King and Queen presented their son at Queen Elinor's Gate and to the audience within the Castle, and then amid Royal salutes returned to the yacht.

The Prince of Wales had laid deep one of the foundation stones of his popularity by introducing, and pronouncing correctly, one or two sentences of Welsh into his replies; the Welsh Red Dragon flew from the Castle, and every care was taken to give an entirely Welsh flavour to the proceedings. The next day the King and Queen opened the new buildings of University College, Bangor, and on the 15th of July at Aberystwith they laid the foundation stone of the new National Library of Wales, and visited University College. The Sunday was agreeably spent at Plas Machynlleth as the guests of Lord Herbert Vane Tempest, who for the next ten years was to be the "life and soul" of parties, whether at Windsor for Ascot Races or at Sandringham for the shooting where his skill might be only, but quite certainly, second to that of the King.

At Edinburgh, where the King and Queen arrived on the

17th, the keys of the city were delivered by, and handed back to, the Lord Provost, and high heraldic functionaries, troops of Yeomanry, detachments of the Royal Scots Guards escorted and guarded the Royal progress to Holyrood Palace, the “doing up” of which was for a long period to be one of Queen Mary’s annual cares. The next day the Royal Archers, in return for new colours, presented three silver arrows on a cushion, the evening being marked by one of the State banquets which must have been beginning to sit a little heavily on some official digestions. The dedication of the new chapel of the Order of the Thistle in St. Giles’s Cathedral, the investiture of two new knights, a review of Veterans and Boy Scouts, and a mammoth garden party at Holyrood, rounded up a trilogy of visits, which in a sense formed an overture to the great visit to be paid overseas in the winter.

At Carnarvon the King had delighted, but a little puzzled his hearers by alluding to “my ancestor King Edward the First”. At Edinburgh he spoke—and spoke quite distinctly—of “my ancestor King Charles the Second.” The air was at once darkened with protests from the whole confraternity of “dry-as-dusts”. Every schoolboy, so we were reminded from all sides, would know—though of course he ought to blush to remember it—that Charles the Second, generous progenitor though he was, had no legitimate offspring. Lord Macaulay’s rather rude, and not wholly accurate, remark to Queen Victoria was quoted *ad nauseam*. “Who”, it was, sometimes contemptuously, sometimes indignantly, asked,

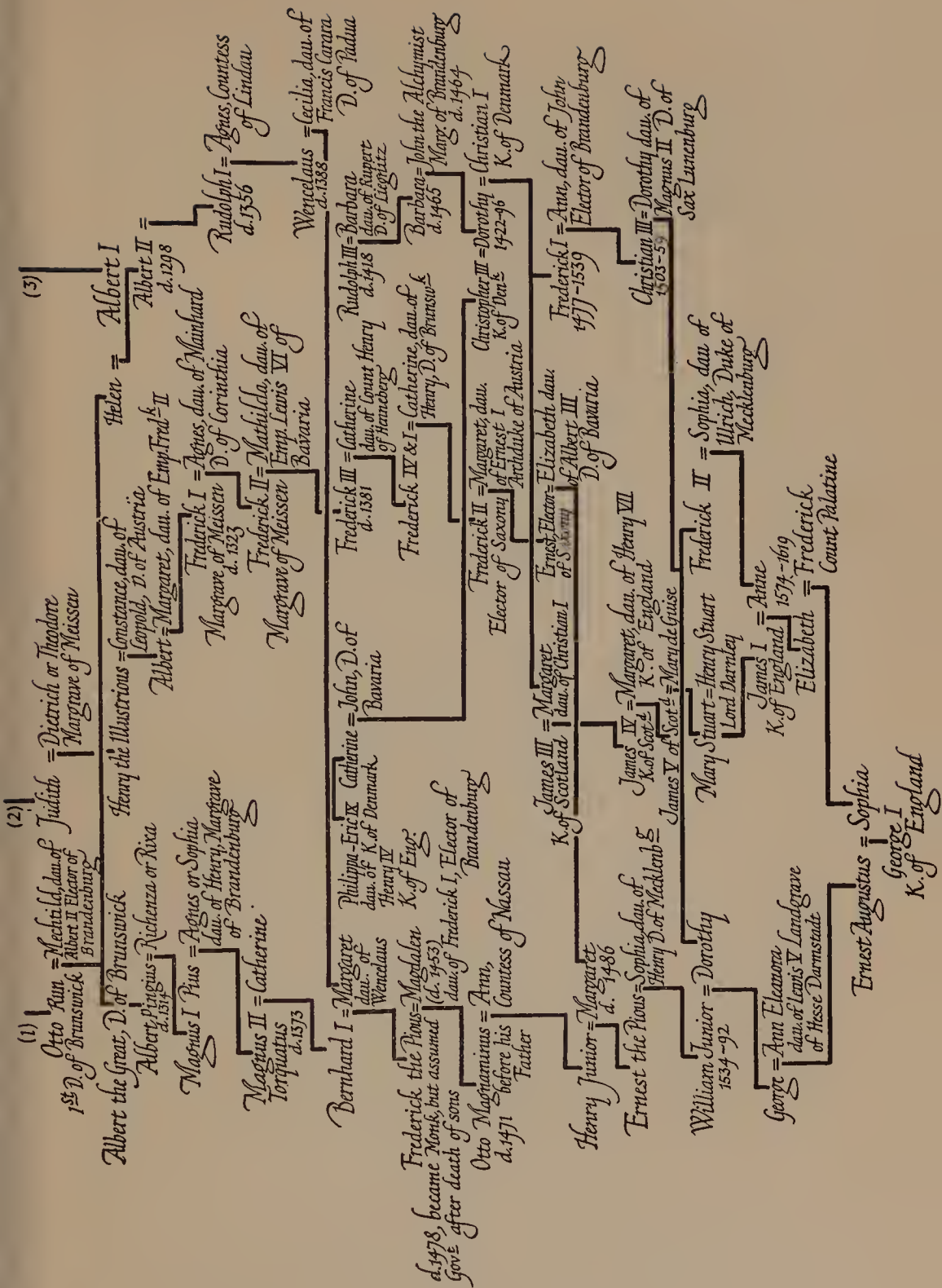
"was responsible for allowing the King to be thus inaccurate in his verbiage?" The King may well have laughed in his sleeve: he had but to appeal to the dictionary for his justification. As originally used, the word "ancestre" was simply the designation of the foregoer or predecessor, and it was not until much more recent times that the term was restricted to the progenitor. If neither Edward the First nor Charles the Second figure in the King's pedigree, they were unquestionably his antecessors, and as such the King justly appealed to them. So many loose statements have been made about the King of England's pedigree,<sup>1</sup> so many ill-informed comments have been lightly passed as to the precise strains of blood which flow in his veins, that it would be well if a table setting out the linear descent of the British Sovereigns were in every well-furnished establishment, or at least in every well-appointed library. One cannot be too grateful

<sup>1</sup> The King's pedigree is, of course, such as few can claim, but Charles Long, in his "Royal Descents", says comfortable words: "When once you are enabled to place your client in a current of decent blood, you are certain to trace him up to some one of the three great fountains of honour, Edward the Third, Edward the First or Henry the Third; and in families of good, or even partially good, descent, the deducing of a husband and wife from *all* the children of Edward the Third and *all* the children of Edward the First has been successfully established by perseverance and research."

Another commentator estimates that at the fortieth genealogical remove (sixteen or seventeen centuries) the total number of a man's progenitors is more than a million millions. "We have all now subsisting," Blackstone wrote, "nearly 270,000,000 of kindred in the fifteenth degree; and if this calculation should appear incompatible with the number of inhabitants on the earth, it is because by intermarriages among the several descendants from the same ancestor, a hundred or a thousand modes of consanguinity may be consolidated in one person, or he may be related to us in a hundred or a thousand different ways." Little wonder we all have doubles!









to Mr. Hewins for his illuminating volume on the Royal Saints, and it is owing to his courtesy that the subjoined Royal Line from Charlemagne to George I. can be set out in its fullness.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE KING'S NAVY

IF, according to Queen Victoria's dictum, Prince Albert Victor "was not to go aloft" because he was destined to be a soldier, his brother's profession was a "*chose jugée*" before ever that brother set foot on the *Britannia*. Nor, to quote Sir John Hay, was he to be "any carpet seaman but one who has served like the rest of us". The sea was to be his home and seamanship was to be his principal stock in trade.

"Our latest Royal sailor—George V.—found something better to do than tailoring while he was in the Navy", wrote, with some pungency, Admiral Penrose Fitzgerald: the good admiral had admittedly in mind the penchant of William IV. for details of naval uniform and the Duke of Edinburgh's exhaustive enquiries as to the fit of officers' frock coats, tail coats, shoulder straps, embroidered waistcoats, and other gadgets. This was not for a moment to suggest that a very businesslike young officer at any time, or in any degree, neglected the "turn-out" either of himself or of his subordinates. Without any of the "exquisiteness" and sartorial perfection which the elder Prince successfully achieved, neatness and scrupulous "grooming", whether in or out of uniform, were the hall-mark of the younger.

The days of the King's active work in the navy were days when it was, very literally, a Silent Service. The modern demands for publicity about all the public services had not arisen, and down to the middle of the Great War the Admiralty (and more particularly the sailors on the Board of the Admiralty) bluntly declined the notion that taxpayers could be expected to have any interest in what happened in the Fleet, how it was managed, how it lived and moved and had its being. Reticence, like charity, covers many blunders, but is also apt to put many useful candles under bushels instead of on their proper candlesticks. The impenetrable veil behind which the Senior Service lived caused a pretty achievement of Prince George, as a sailor, to be folded out of view until twenty years after the happening. The naval manoeuvres of 1889 were to furnish an opportunity for a lieutenant twenty-four years old to save a warship from total loss and to save the lives of all her complement—and this in heavy weather, at considerable risk to his own ship, and by his own exertions.

That August was one of the stormiest within the experience of the British Isles. Prince George was in command of torpedo boat No. 79, and with two other torpedo boats had to make Rathmullen on Lough Swilly for a rendezvous with the senior officer. No. 79 turned up at daylight one morning, and her commander reported that one of his consorts had broken down and was anchored on a lee shore not far from the rocks: he had tried to tow her off, but had carried away his only hawser, a small wire one, and nothing else could be done than leave her there, with the third torpedo boat standing by, while he came in for fresh ropes. The position

was so fraught with peril that the senior officer's impulse was to proceed himself to the scene and superintend the salvage. A plucky young lieutenant, however, begged "to have another try", and, supplied with a new 5½-in. hemp hawser, he took torpedo boat 79 out again in the teeth of a heavy gale and high seas. The senior naval officer was to pass some anxious hours: he had taken a good many risks, as the disabled craft was on an exposed shore, and if anything did go wrong an ugly hour might await him.

The commander of No. 79 and his crew had been up all the previous night, grappling with a tough job in rough weather, and even under good conditions the salvage of the broken-down consort would be no easy task. There was need for bold initiative, nerves of steel and skilful seamanship, and the commander of No. 79 was to prove that he was deficient in none of these when with the noon he towed in the sister-ship and quietly brought her to her harbour mooring. The little story of gallantry might well have reposed on a shelf of oblivion but that the senior naval officer concerned was moved in 1910 to take it down, dust it and give it to the light. No wonder Admiral Fitzgerald, the officer in question, threw a little measure of scorn about "tailoring" into his tribute.

Torpedo boat 79, on board which he received a visit from the Kaiser, who had just been allowed to don the uniform of Honorary Admiral of the Fleet, must have long stood for one of the King's happiest memories of his service afloat. It was his first taste of independent command: he was too sensible not to be aware that he was doing good work, and to that particular work he addressed himself with all his

mind and all his strength. There came to him, when 79 was in Portsmouth harbour, a message that the Prince of Wales would like him to join the Duke of Richmond's party for Goodwood Races. The Prince of Wales, whose correctitude was never at fault, had asked the Commander-in-Chief whether the necessary leave could be granted. The Commander-in-Chief was in cheerful agreement with the suggestion, and notified the young officer that he was at full liberty to accept the invitation. The Prince demurred; then as thereafter he had but slender appetite for horse-racing. To win a local cup with his yacht was for him sweeter far than to win a Hunt Cup at Ascot, and indeed close observers once gasped to see the King engaged in conversation with Sir Philip Hunloke regarding his yacht while one of his horses, with a crack jockey on his back, was engaged in a struggle for that important handicap. On this occasion No. 79 was under orders to proceed to sea to carry out certain important exercises. A fig for Goodwood if it was a question of a ship going to sea, for however short a while, without a captain. The Commander-in-Chief was begged to explain the situation and let a sailor go on with his work. There was but one qualm: the Princess of Wales would be disappointed. A week with her sailor son, the sailor son well knew, would have been such a joy. Here no Commander-in-Chief must act as a go-between, and "I will make it all right with my mother" was the deferential hint on this particular point.

His aptitude for "making it all right" was a characteristic to make him beloved as a naval officer. Prince George made it "all right" for his ship's company, with the result that he

always had a happy ship. So much did he make it "all right" for his shipmates in the ward-room that when seafaring days were over they still remained his devoted friends. Among the officers of the old cruiser *Melampus*, of which he was in charge in 1892, were Charles Cust, Godfrey Faussett with Evan Thomas, one of the outstanding figures of the battle of Jutland, and C. E. Anson. Two of these sometime lieutenants have laboured year in and year out, despite at times failing health, in their master's personal service; the other two, although the navy held them closely, remained within the very small circle who can claim anything like real intimacy with the King.

He made it "all right" for his men, as one of many incidents may testify. When in command of the gunboat *Thrush* in 1890, a man was put on board to be taken off to a naval prison to serve a sentence. The sailor was neither a "waster" nor a "rotter," but had just got out of hand and had been sentenced by court-martial. Prince George had a yarn with the culprit: here, he was sure, was not one of "the King's hard bargains (an irreclaimable bad lot) but a devil-may-care bluejacket who had slipped up. When the man was released the Prince asked for his transfer from the ship in which he had gone wrong to the *Thrush*. The admiral agreed, and when the delinquent joined, the "skipper" spoke plain words to him: he offered him a clean sheet and a fresh start, gave him a sovereign and shore leave, and gave him at the same time his chance to go straight again. A sailor, who in other hands might have made a hopeless mess of things, ended up in the service with good rank, good service and good pension. In later years the King has not been



backward to show that he can "make it all right" when things are being given the wrong twist: officious officials, forgetting that the King is Head of the navy, have more than once found their arrangements readjusted with a firm hand. "Someone in the Admiralty" blundered badly when the King and Queen were returning in the *Medina* from India in 1912. The programme, as approved, was that the *Medina* would call at Malta, where a French squadron would be at the same time, and the Governor was to give a dinner at which the King was announced to be present. After the *Medina* left Bombay on the return voyage, Admiralty orders were sent to Malta, cancelling the programme and ordering the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, to proceed to Gibraltar, there to receive the King.

Sir Edmund Poë was then in command, and he knew his Sovereign well: he had been the examiner to put Prince George through his paces in the "seamanship exam.", and he was in command in the East Indies in 1905 when the Prince of Wales was in India. Sir Edmund now made no comment on the Admiralty orders, but simply "wirelessly" to the *Medina* his regrets that he would not have the honour of receiving their Majesties at Admiralty House, Malta, as the Admiralty had sent him conflicting orders, which he quoted verbatim. The telegram was all-sufficient. Two days later the Admiralty telegraphed cancelling the cancellation of the Malta programme; to Malta the King was determined to go, and to Malta the King firmly went.

Officialdom was again to get its knuckles rapped over an even more serious error in procedure. A certain Oriental potentate was due to visit our shores; the Foreign Office rep-

resented to the Admiralty that a naval display, with plenty of guns, torpedoes, bombs and depth charges, would healthily stimulate His Duskiness, and the Admiralty thereupon prepared a scheme and sent it to the Foreign Office. But some bright individual having been deputed to see that all publicity should attend the Oriental visitor, sent the "good story" to the press. The next morning the King rubbed his eyes to read in the newspapers all about the great display his navy was going to provide, and he ascertained the news was no less new to the heads of the navy. It was "made all right" for certain very high-placed gentlemen in the course of that morning, and for a few days the navy was by no means sure whether their "show" was on or off.

"The sun must wait, Admiral; we can do anything in the navy." Admiral Poë was entertaining the King to tea on board the *Hyacinth* and the official photographer was to record the event with a picture of a group on the quarter-deck. Just as the camera was being adjusted, the routine report was made to the Admiral: "Sunset, sir." The Admiral turned to the King with: "Time for sunset, sir." The correct answer would be "Make it so", and the recognised ritual would follow. But that evening the sun must repeat a Biblical experience and stand steady till the photographer had had his innings.

A large slice of Prince George's time as a midshipman was spent in the corvette *Canada* on the North America and West Indies station, where Sir Edmund Commerell was in command. Promotion to a lieutenancy awaited the Prince on his nineteenth birthday, and that August he returned home for qualifying courses in the various training estab-

lishments: Greenwich College for seamanship, the *Vernon* for torpedo and electrical work, and the *Excellent* for gunnery. At the last establishment he came under the influence of two of the outstanding characters of the service: John Fisher, who was then Captain of the Gunnery School, and Percy Scott, who was the First Lieutenant. For Fisher, the King conceived a real affection, and bore with the tempestuous character of the man for the sake of the naval genius which fired him. His accession found Fisher Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, and one of the first engagements of a very busy Sovereign was to spend a delightful, if strenuous, week among all the new types of ships and weapons being brought into general use for a hypothetical Great War. His examinations passed, Prince George repaired once more to sea, and in 1886 joined the *Thunderer* in the Mediterranean, where his uncle the Duke of Edinburgh was Commander-in-Chief. To the writer there comes the memory of travelling with the Prince from Cannes, where he had spent a few days with his father, and learning that he had that day set aside his razors and begun to grow a beard. The procedure was entirely in order, as before the days of the high-pressure advertising of razor blades, naval officers were seldom smooth-cheeked.

The Prince was not very long in the *Thunderer*, but long enough to bear his part in a day's coaling in Turkish waters. Everyone on board at that period lent a hand in that grimy job, and on that particular day officers and men were in a very short time complexioned as sweeps. While coaling was proceeding, a high Court dignitary arrived. The Sultan had learned that a grandson of Queen Victoria was on board and

had despatched a first class official to present his compliments. The Duke of Edinburgh promptly sent for the Prince, who arrived, his face black with coal dust, his hands grimed, his oldest clothes thickly powdered with black. The tact of the Oriental dignitary was perfect: he offered with deep obeisance his master's greetings, and nothing, he assured a quite unabashed Prince, would give the Sultan greater pleasure than to know that the descendant of so great a Sovereign was learning to be subject to the toils and pains common to humanity!

The well-known "dash" of the battle-cruiser *Indomitable* occurred in 1908 when the Prince of Wales was being conveyed home from the Quebec Tercentenary Celebrations. An effort was made to put up a record run across the Atlantic and everybody on board lent a hand in the stokehold, the Prince himself going down, with some of the other officers, to throw a dozen shovelfuls of coal into the furnaces "for luck." A legend grew up that he did a full watch below shovelling coal, a feat of physical endurance beyond the powers of anyone untrained from youth upwards in the work. Many of the ship's officers did spells of stoking, however, and continuous energies resulted in the *Indomitable* reaching Cowes in a very little over five days from Quebec, a passage not yet beaten by a merchant ship.

From the *Thunderer* the Prince passed to the *Dreadnought*, not the all-big-gun battleship of the present generation's memory, but the eighth of the name, a 10,000-ton turret ship; twenty-three years later, in the *Dreadnought's* successor, he was to proceed to sea with his Royal Ensign flying at the main. Flags are always interesting fellows, and

it is not amiss to recall that when the King went to India for the Coronation Durbar, the *Medina* was the first ship to pass east of Suez flying the Admiralty flag at the fore, the Royal Standard at the main, and an Admiral of the Fleet's Union flag at the mizzen. On the eve of the gloomy surrender of the German fleet in the North Sea, it was fondly hoped that those three flags would be flying the next day in the Fleet flagship, with the King himself taking the surrender. *Mutatis mutandis*, the Kaiser would have leapt at and revelled in so showy an opportunity, and one's blood runs cold to think of the grotesque oratory, bordering on blasphemy, with which he would have decorated the occasion. But nothing could be more foreign to the Kaiser's British cousin than anything which smacks of *cabotinage*, and he left the glory, as well as the duty, of that day to the men who had toiled and fought afloat throughout the War.

A couple of months were happily passed in 1887 on the ship named after his adored mother, the *Alexandra*; there followed a spell in home waters, first in the *Northumberland*, an old ironclad built in 1866 and then in the good torpedo-boat 79.

If the idea were to give the Prince a training in world travel, this was carried out in his next command, when he took the gunboat *Thrush* to the North America and West Indies station, a locality with a wide geographical range of interest. A farewell dinner was given by Prince George's contemporaries to celebrate an appointment which proved onerous rather than dangerous, as it was not until after the Prince left the *Thrush* that she entered upon eight years of



continuous scrapping: up the Gambia River against Foddeh Cabba, under Admiral Bedford against King Koko, under Admiral Rawson at Zanzibar, and in the Boer War.

While the *Thrush* was writing little pages of history, the active service of a gallant Prince, who was heart and soul in his work, was to be drastically curtailed. He commissioned the cruiser *Melampus* for the manœuvres in 1892, but here was his last command as "Prince George"; death's swift, sudden stroke was to make a vacancy for him—which he could not but fill—as second in the line of succession to the Throne. His only other command afloat was the brief special service cruise on board the cruiser *Crescent* 1898, undertaken to secure the qualification, necessary under the regulations, of having commanded a fully commissioned ship as a Captain before advancement to Rear-Admiral.

But if the Prince was not to be employed again in the navy, he was to remain on the active list and to abate nothing of his keenness for all that concerned the service he honoured so wisely and loved so well; a few years later he could seize an occasion to show he had not lost touch with his old craft. On the return from the Dominion tour, the Channel Squadron met the *Ophir* off Cape Clear to escort the ship on the last part of the voyage. The weather was very heavy, and Admiral Wilson, in command of the escorting ships, had misgivings, as the whole plan depended on keeping the *Ophir* to a programme which would fit in with King Edward's arrangements to welcome her in the morning at Spithead. The Duke of Cornwall, illustrious passenger though he was, took things into his own hands, decided it was too dangerous to try and take shelter in Portland for



the night, and ordered the *Ophir* to Totland Bay, the Channel Fleet to go through the Needles into the Yarmouth Roads.

A "happy thought" of George Prince of Wales the next year was to create a naval precedent. Following on King Edward's Coronation, a Review of the rather ornate order was being arranged, and a number of naval officers were to be invested; the Prince made the apt suggestion that the Investiture should be held on board the Royal yacht while she was at sea for the Review. The suggestion was wholly to King Edward's liking and the occasion proved wholly successful, but somehow seemed to have been forgotten: for when King George repeated, under very different conditions, the experiment at Scapa in 1917, it was generally spoken of as a remarkable War-time innovation. But if not a novelty, the scene on board the *Queen Elizabeth*—the mighty vessel which had been so fruitful in controversy—was one never to be wiped from the memory of those who witnessed it. The King was obviously and deeply moved. In the dim light—for the ceremony took place on the half-deck under shelter owing to a raging storm—his eyes shone with excitement and he spoke eagerly of the little drama which was being enacted; there must have seemed to him a chivalrous symbolism in the fact that with Beatty's sword the accolade was bestowed on Hugh Evan Thomas, the old shipmate and friend. But even on that day there were some to forecast the bitter arguments which, with War over, would rage over the handling of ships and squadrons at Jutland; and, truth to tell, the disagreement between Beatty and Evan Thomas as to the opening phases of the battle,

when their two squadrons were ( or should have been) working in close conjunction, did a little to mar the symbolism which marked an unforgettable Investiture.

At Rosyth, the next year, again afloat, the King presented the insignia of the K.C.B. and the K.C.M.G. to Admiral Rodman and Admiral Strauss, the American Admirals serving with the Grand Fleet. It was a presentation, as distinct from an Investiture; and there followed a visit to the American flagship, when the British Sovereign heard American boatswains piping him over the side, saw American marines on their own quarter-deck presenting arms to him, and listened to American bandsmen greeting him with the strains of the British National Anthem. The whole of the American Sixth Battle Squadron, serving under Beatty, was represented on board the *New York* by detachments; the King inspected them all carefully, commenting on little differences in uniform and equipment, but paying far more heed to the fitting out of the ships. It was not until after the War that British men-of-war were indulged with accommodation for dental officers, fully equipped barbers' shops for the lower deck, and laundries with up-to-date machinery; but the Americans had already given us the go-by in these and kindred matters, and there was room for animated discussion between the King and the American officers.

The King has favoured many a Naval Review since his Accession, but they have differed sharply from the "still-life" pictures of the Victorian era, when all the ships lay carefully at anchorage. As well perhaps then that they should remain quiescent, as, largely manned as they were wont to be by reservists and officers from the Emergency List, ugly

trouble might have ensued if half a dozen of them had started to manœuvre with the others in Spithead's narrow waters. The Review which immediately preceded the Great War saw all the ships in the anchorage steam out to sea, pass the Royal yacht and carry out simple evolutions; eight years later, in the first post-War Review, the King was to see a very different kind of fleet and very different evolutions. At Torbay, and also on the way up Channel to Portsmouth, he was to witness attack after attack by aeroplane and torpedo-plane launched against the Armada; submarine traps lay along the path of advance, while destroyers were flung hither and thither in anti-submarine screen operations. Sham static Reviews on the water were no more to the taste of a King—to whom the submarine is no untried vehicle—than sham fights on land; where he lends his presence on land or water, real “business”, however unadorned, must be forthcoming.

King Edward's concern for everything that concerned the army, down to the smallest detail, was to have for its pendant King George's determination to know precisely what was happening, and what was likely to happen, in the navy. With little circumlocution the Sea Lords were quickly made aware in 1910 that if they had any novelty to introduce, any modifications in existing practice to suggest, they must be prepared with a very clear case before submission for final sanction. Scarcely had a new King settled himself on the Throne when it seemed to him to be, almost before all things, necessary to spend a week at Portsmouth, and there make an exhaustive investigation as to the state of efficiency and preparedness of the Fleet. It was a moment of many ex-

periments and serious development. New material, new methods, new schemes, were cropping up almost weekly; new ideas, often the fruit of Lord Fisher's fertile brain, were passing the experimental stage and were crying aloud either to be proved of real worth or found wanting. To the examination of many intricate and closely discussed points the King could, and did, bring practical seafaring knowledge, tempered by lack of any sort of prejudice and fortified by total independence of any sort of influence.

The changes at issue were of no humdrum character. Flying had passed into the province of practical politics and brains were being cudgelled to evolve some means of carrying aeroplanes to sea and there to launch them from the ships. The first proposal was to use the gun turrets of the ships as a *point de.départ*, and to launch the aeroplanes from a small platform built over the guns. The device was already in use in the spring of 1914, but as late as the summer of 1917 the feat was still very hazardous and was regarded as terribly "hush-hush" in the Fleet. There was a day at Rosyth when the King, on one of his visits to the Grand Fleet, was to see some experiments carried out from on board the *Lion*; he went into the whole proceeding very thoroughly, asked innumerable and sometimes baffling questions, and quite evidently appreciated to the full the difficulties and dangers involved in the undertaking, no less than the potential value of the aeroplanes if successfully launched. The experiments showed that risk had been by no means banished but was no longer incommensurate with possible important results. The occasion was slightly spoilt by an untoward incident: some of the naval war correspondents

were allowed to refer to the matter in their published despatches, and a stinging rebuke was administered to the Chief Censor for suffering so unhappy a leakage of so-called secrets; a rebuke which admitted of the reply that the Admiral in conversation might well have warned the war correspondents to be silent on the subject.

Had submarines been in existence when he was a serving officer, it is fairly certain that the then highly adventurous Prince George would not only have served but would have endeavoured to specialise in them. For him under-sea-craft has always been a theme of liveliest interest, and at Portsmouth in 1904, as Prince of Wales, he insisted on being submerged in one of the very earliest types; some element of risk, he was told, could not be avoided, but for the risk, whether elementary or otherwise, he cared not the snap of a finger.

The King was very anxious, during the War, to have experience at sea in one of the big "K" class submarines, the only class ever built that had active war experience as steam-driven vessels on the surface, but circumstances intervened—which was perhaps as well—and only allowed him to inspect one at anchor in Scapa Flow; he thus missed the weird experience of being under water with a stokehold full of steam from the boilers, that was slowly condensing into the bilges.

Oil fuel, new gunnery devices, improved torpedoes, wireless, were all developing for naval use in the early years of his reign, and with the growth and adoption of each to naval uses the King saw to it that he was kept in close touch.

Military tactics and strategy have perhaps been a little



outside a Sailor King's complete grasp; at manœuvres he would imbibe from Sir William Robertson, who had just been in charge of Staff College, and other Staff officers, all the information he could assimilate. In the War he would take infinite pains to understand the why and wherefore of military movements, but to the end he remained a pupil, though a very apt and eager pupil. With naval tactics and strategy, however, a very different story could be told, so easily abreast of modern thought and modern activities did he move: so entirely was he master of detail, that the King was qualified for the teacher's chair rather than for the learner's stool. Nothing escaped him of the bitter arguments that went on in the navy from 1906 to 1914 between the Material School and the Historical School, but at no instant did he betray any bias toward one school or the other.

No less *de facto* than *de jure* can the King be regarded as the Head of the Navy, yet he would never allow his own views to conflict in any way with the conduct of everyday work.

"His Majesty's Merchant Navy"; this was a term which occurred in one of the King's early messages to the nation, when the nation was beginning to realise what the Merchant Service was forward to do and dare; the pity of it is that the term should not have come at once into general use. It was perhaps only in storm and in darkness that the officers of the Royal Navy and the officers of the Merchant Service unfolded to one another all their finest qualities, and they would perhaps be equally puzzled to remember now how divergent were their pre-War views.

Yet another earnest of a King's appreciation of the Mer-



chant Service was to be found in the appointment of a Royal Naval Reserve officer to be Aide-de-Camp; such an appointment has been continued, and it is scarcely likely to be allowed ever to lapse. The King's visit to the White Star liner *Majestic*, the world's largest ship, soon after Sir Bert-ram Hayes, of the Royal Naval Reserve, had taken her in charge, provided a striking illustration of the effect the Sovereign's interest in the Merchant Service had on the merchant seamen. The *Mauretania* was outward bound and passed the *Majestic* while the King was on board. Her captain, Commodore Sir Arthur Rostron, had his crew "man-ship", navy fashion, as she passed; surely the only occasion in history on which a merchant ship has carried out so purely naval a ceremonial.

The King was a yachtsman in early life as he sailed, when only nine years old, with his father, to win the Queen's Cup at Cowes on board the *Hildegarde*. When the *Britannia* came as a legacy to him, he had probably forgotten as much about her as King Edward—keen yachtsman though he was—ever knew; for a quarter of a century he had constantly sailed on the yacht, as previously on her predecessor, the *Aline*, and when racing (he) would see to it that every guest on board had literally pulled his weight. Seen from the shore big yacht racing looks a fairly easy, as well as very pretty business, but in effect there is of course hard work for everyone on board; and on board the *Britannia* the King brooks no ornamental passengers. It happened that a professional photographer, to whom permission had been granted to go afloat in the yacht to get some pictures of the King at sea, selected a heavy day—real *Britannia* weather, as yacht-





ing men are apt to call it—with a stiff breeze blowing. Every hand was wanted on the ropes, and the artist spent his whole day pulling and hauling to the stern and vigorous orders of the King, with rueful side-glances at his own rapidly swelling hands, while the camera reposed in the saloon where he had deposited it when he came on board. The King had quite forgotten the unhappy individual's special mission—but as soon as he realised, at the end of the race, that for a professional there had been a wasted day, he promised another chance. The photographer was careful to choose his own sort of weather for his "other chance".

The *Britannia* was built in 1892, and in the first thirty years of her life scored 141 first prizes in 264 starts, while in 1927 she brought her total of first prizes up to 187. If her cost when new was about £9000, thirty years later three times that sum would have been required to replace her and her prize-winning record was in many respects remarkable. King Edward in the long run won many races and large stakes on the Turf, but there happened a year when his horses perpetually failed to catch the judge's eye. The Prince of Wales could then remind Lord Marcus Beresford, who managed the King's stud, that yacht racing, if less feverishly exciting than horse racing, could anyhow be more fruitful in trophies.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE ARMED FORCES OF THE CROWN

A SAILOR King: there is a healthy tang of salt in the title, and the King's knowledge of the Navy, acquired at first hand, had never been allowed to rust; if he had few intimates, he had many friends among the men who occupied their business in great waters. But, unlike his immediate predecessors, King George's relations with the army until his accession had been little other than formal. Queen Victoria, who was economical in smiles for the Senior Service, would frequently allude to "her soldiers" in terms of maternal affection, and unquestionably had their welfare, no less than their efficiency, close at heart. Her letters abound in enquiries, suggestions, eulogies and reproaches, directed towards army administration: her solitary excursion into picturesque language is her description, when giving the Crimean medals, of the soldier's rough hand touching for the first time the hand of the Sovereign. King Edward, from the day he joined the Grenadier Guards at the Curragh until the last day of his life, kept himself closely informed on every point which concerned military prosperity and progress, the externals perhaps making special appeal to him. He was continuously on terms of familiar friendship with officers, past and present, without as well as within the

Household Brigade; no reward or blame accorded to any of them escaped his benevolent notice; not a belt or a button could be altered or discarded without some remark being drawn from him. His reiterated request in 1882 to take part in the brilliant little campaign against Arabi Pasha was refused; but three years later it had been decided that, if the fall of Khartoum and the murder of Gordon were to be forthwith avenged, the Prince of Wales should join the Expeditionary Force on the banks of the Nile.

As an Army Chief, King George was to start under a considerable handicap: for some unknown but unfortunate reason he had not even enjoyed the military rank and military commands which his high place would seem to claim. One salient instance may suffice. The monarch is essentially, as well as traditionally, a Field-Marshal, but it appertains only to the monarch to confer that rank. Yet it was scarcely seemly that, on mounting the Throne, King George should hand the baton to himself, and there took place consequently the unique and almost Gilbertian incident of a bevy of Field-Marshals presenting themselves at the Palace and solemnly requesting His Majesty to include himself in their number.

Curiously enough there was to arise in the first days of King George's reign a question of procedure which went to the roots of the formation of the original Troops of Horse Guards. Throughout the ten days which elapsed before the body of King Edward was carried to Westminster Hall, the protective duty had been entrusted to the Grenadier Guards, whereas it had always been the creed of the Household Cavalry that no armed parties other than drawn from them-



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selves were permitted to penetrate inside the precincts of the Royal Palace. Could any precedent, it was asked, be found for this departure from what had been recognised as an inviolable rule? Superficially the question may have seemed lacking in weight and to offer the obvious answer that the Sovereign within his demesne could order what persons he pleased to perform whatever duties he might prescribe. Actually the crux was whether the Household Cavalry had or had not special privileges, special relations, and special responsibilities which were summed up in, and illustrated by, the functions of the Gold Stick.

The Silver Stick-in-Waiting addressed himself to the King's Private Secretary:

May 10, 1910.

I am urged by the Household Cavalry to ask you to place on record their respectful protest against any Troops, other than themselves, being allowed in a Royal Palace.

It has always been their proud possession that they were actually the Body Guard of the Sovereign and therefore the sole possessors of this privilege.

As Osborne House was not a Royal Palace, no protest was made at the time of Queen Victoria's death at the Grenadier Guards and others being allowed to enter the precincts and watch their Sovereign's remains; and you will understand that, at this moment, they are diffident of raising any point of controversy and ask to be allowed to assure His Majesty of their absolute obedience to His Wishes and Commands.

The reply was guarded but sympathetic; it suggested that an exhaustive memorandum might be drawn up to exhibit

the ground on which the protest rested, and it was arranged that the Brigade of Guards should be invited to deliver a riposte. The "case" of the Household Cavalry, which relied largely on documentation, took the form of a petition, of which the preamble ran:

The Life Guards and Royal Horse Guards humbly submit, for reference to the King's pleasure, that, in virtue of their fundamental constitution and of their special association with the Royal Household, to them and to them alone has been accorded the privilege of doing military duty, armed or unarmed, within doors at the Royal Palaces; and that, notwithstanding the distinguished position occupied by, and the dignified functions entrusted to the Brigade of Guards, the unique personal and quasi-domestic service which the Brigade of Household Cavalry has throughout its history rendered to the Sovereign is clearly proved by the precedents of two-and-a-half centuries.

The "cases" were eventually forwarded by command of the King for the consideration of a former Lord Chancellor. Lord Halsbury, after sufficient delay to give an additional spice of dignity to his reply, delivered his judgment. This, when stripped of its legal bells and harness, resolved itself into a pronouncement—with which both contending parties were in complete accord, but which did nothing to traverse the record of the Household Cavalry—that the Sovereign must not be trammelled by precedent in the selection of any of his servants for any duty which he might at any time and in any place be disposed to assign to them.

The precise relations between the King and his army are difficult to define, largely because, whatever the subject, his personal feelings—fenced in as he is by officialdom—are hard to come at. Are the stirring speeches to the army, or to component parts of it, the considered preparations of his advisers, or the expression of his own mind? The reviews and parades which necessarily form part of his programme, are they merely items of routine, or do they strike him as genuine manifestations of the loyal troops enlisted under his standard? Whatever the numbing influence of environment, or whatever his capacity for self-repression, there is reason to think that the King makes no attempt to mask the fact that he is sensibly moved by the sweeping lines of scarlet or khaki that have so often swung past him to the jaunty clatter of the kettledrums, the measured beat of the regimental marches, or the self-made music of the gun-team. However exalted the Personage, he would be more—or less—than human if no delightful thrill ran through him when in a great march past every eye of every man looks straight into his own: the descendants of the men of Dettingen, and Fontenoy, and Waterloo, and Inkerman; the men themselves—and their sons—who marched and toiled and bled so that a Throne might endure—all these have enshrined in their souls, rather than at Westminster, the monarch who embodies the traditions of Plantagenet, Tudor and far-off Saxon, the glamour of the Stuart, the solid worth of Hanover and Brunswick.

The British may be a nation of shopkeepers—though it is increasingly unhappy that so much of the world's shopping should now be done elsewhere—and the British Army



has normally been very restricted, yet to its ranks there have always been attracted men from every other profession; if there be no avowed military class, the British fighting spirit has never been quenched in a thousand years of history, through which the patches of complete peace have been few and far between. The old tradition of arms, handed down from archery greens and from beneath the walls of a hundred keeps, still provides, for the mere asking, the ideal military material. A great nation, easy-going and peace-loving though it may be, calls for a military Head, and the soldier's uniform is not the least contribution to the dignity of the Throne. State duties in plain clothes suggest a contradiction in terms, and "uniform" to the vast proportion of citizens more than ever means army uniform. The hyper-pacifist proposal that the troops should parade on Armistice Day without their arms was at once publicly decried and derided. The King must perforce be a soldier, and with that aptitude for accommodating himself to circumstances, and that sheer common sense which has marked his public life, the King has never suffered his lack of early, or indeed any, military training to become apparent among his troops. He has been in close, and even intimate, contact with those same troops under manifold and very varying conditions. King Edward, soldier though he was at heart, inclined too much to the old régime to permit himself such close association with the man behind the gun as has been the constant practice of his son. This, of course, is largely due to time as well as circumstance. Until the South African War fully opened the minds of soldiers and, for the first time, interested the great middle classes in military hap-



penings, the private soldier was just a private soldier, a stout enough fellow who could clean his pipeclay, march, fight and lower his tankard of ale as well as any in Europe—and perhaps better than most. That he should be the possessor of any form of intelligence was no more thought of than one of the weaker sex in the Cabinet or in the pulpit. The Great War has bequeathed us an army in which intelligence in “other ranks” is to be cultivated as indispensable to the working of the military machine: the soldier must be educated, trained as a specialist, encouraged to think for himself, and finally, having for his term of years used his brain as well as his brawn in the King’s service, he is to be turned into the world as a sound and loyal citizen with a trade to his hands—an asset rather than a liability as—small blame to himself—he so often in years past proved himself to be.

To all the schemes which this train of thought has involved the King has turned himself eagerly. The grand parade and the set field-day have given place to the personal visit to the training areas, the Technical Army School, the soldiers’ sports grounds, the work-shops in which he is prepared for civilian life. Here and in kindred circumstances the figure of the King is familiar: his shrewd enquiries have surprised, as his apt suggestions have pleased, the men among whom he has come in simple service kit. In the barrack-room the phrase—garnished perhaps with epithet—runs, “The King is one of us”; in the barrack-room there can be no higher form of praise than this. Kipling’s “Tommy” is a figure of the historic past. Publicans really did refuse to serve redcoats, drunk or sober, and Tommy knew what it was to be turned away from the theatre door. Folks really

did say: "Tommy, how's your soul?" and far ruder things too; and there is still the bitter remembrance of a Town Council seeking to prevent its very pavements from being trodden by the soldiery. Like a domestic animal who has never experienced kindness, the soldier has responded to the changed attitude on the part of the public and to arrangements under which, with the King's glad approval, and often on his recommendation, he is no longer treated as a schoolboy but is respected as a man who respects his calling and himself; he is superlatively proud that the Head of his calling should enter heart and soul into his doings. Whether it be true or apocryphal that the King is a keen lover of the "Soccer" game, there could be no subtler stroke than his regular attendance at the final of the Army Football Cup. Again and again it has warmed the soldiers' hearts—and no warmer hearts exist—to see their King strolling into the new cook-house, the battalion's pride and joy, or bending over a bench in one of the new vocational schools, prying with the eye of a keen amateur into the heart of a tank, or climbing up the stairs to present himself as a visitor at the door of a married quarter. Yet these things can easily be denounced as inquisitive or patronising; an entirely right thing is so often done in the wrong way. A "visit" may be planned by a Staff and prove a failure; it may be given the requisite touch by the Visitor himself and score a complete success.

A very vivid imagination and an acute sense of the picturesque are qualities which only the fulsome flatterer would attribute to King George, and the stage-management of the events in which he must play the chief part has not

always been too happy. But occasions are not rare when he would insist on free rein being given to the imagination of others, and would be willing to conform wholly to the arrangements of genuine experts. It might be difficult to quote a scene in peace-time history to rival the Review of the Household Cavalry in Windsor Great Park just a year before the outburst of war. Under the shadow of centuries-old trees were assembled the three regiments, the very flower of cavalry, with figures famous in recent military history to head them. Miniature manœuvre succeeded miniature manœuvre until an English midsummer sun glinted back from near a thousand steel breasts in the final charge, when a thousand black horses in lines were reined back on their haunches almost at the very feet of the monarch, and the men—trained to the minute—rising in their stirrups, sword-points high in the air, voiced as one man their allegiance to their august Colonel-in-Chief, their defiance of who should assail him. It was a fitting gesture from men-folk who were soon to be tested on the bloody field, to take their stand across the path of enemy hordes marching on the British Channel ports, and perishing in their refusal to be swept from their appointed post. Six years were to pass before a remnant, gaunt in khaki, would march past their King in the first great post-War triumph.

However close and real the relations of the King's army to the King, and although every private soldier takes his oath to King George V., his heirs and successors, and every officer receives his commission in the King's name, the army is mustered under the authority of the Army Act, designed for the very purpose of frustrating the Crown's control.



*A Monarch in war-time.*





And if the forces of the Crown have been rightly regarded as a Royal instrument, they have as such been again and again mistrusted by the civilian population. So late as the last century Members of Parliament deprecated the building of Regent's Park Barracks as "an attempt at splendour and awkward magnificence productive of something between a palace and a stable." If this be at all a correct description of the present building, King George, when enjoying there one of his rare experiences of a boxing contest, may well have remarked that the stable rather than the palace suggested itself. But a prominent 19th century newspaper could write: "We cannot cease to regard barracks other than with an eye of jealousy, considering them capable of being—if not altogether likely to be—converted into so many fortresses of the Crown formidable to the freedom of the people." Royal though the army undoubtedly was in origin, never once has it been employed to enforce the Royal will, and on the only occasion since the Restoration when State and Crown have come into direct conflict, the army deserted James II. and adhered to those who avowed themselves supporters of the Constitution as by law established. Yet it is but fair to the tradition of the King's army to maintain that this was not a deliberate desertion as such by the body of the troops. The whole revolution, whatever praiseworthy principles can be adduced on behalf of it, was odious with intrigue, and many of the army chiefs were involved. Military conditions were still semi-feudal, and most of the commands were raised personally by their immediate commanders, whose colours were often incorporated in the Royal uniform. It was, therefore, not unnatural, that men



should follow their leaders to whom, rather than to the Treasury direct, they were accustomed to look for pay and maintenance. The Household Troops, whose service is always close to the person of the Sovereign, turned their backs on their treacherous leaders when they found they were being led to join the enemy and not to fight him; the Life Guards never wavered for a second, and the Coldstream stood firm at the command of old Lord Craven to defend the Palace of Whitehall, James II. could have retained more than sufficient of fine fighting-men to defend the standard of the Stuarts, but he hauled it down in abject terror and deserted his army, his capital and his Throne in foolish flight.

The army for three and a half centuries has been controlled by the Government of the day simply because the Government keeps the key of the stores cupboard which holds the supplies, and the King, in whom lodges the whole-hearted allegiance and trust of his troops, cannot of his own volition move a regiment from one station to another. In 1914, when for the moment it looked as though the voice of the non-intervention party in the Cabinet would prevail, the question was acute whether the King, knowing, as perhaps no one else knew, what was at stake, might have called upon his army to defend his country's honour. It would have been a *beau geste*, and one which might well have cleared the air and pointed the way; but unless it had been followed by an immediate minor *coup d'état* the *beau geste* might have proved abortive. But look on this picture and on that: if the King were constitutionally unable to set afoot and send afield even an expeditionary force, while

his Cousin of Germany could, with a stroke of his pen, mobilise his millions, the position was reversed at the Cease Fire when the German Emperor was disowned, denounced and deserted by his men of war, while the King of England could claim and receive the full-throated homage of an army which had rendered England the dominant military power in the World. The Royal supremacy of the army, if difficult to translate into action, is none the less a thing of indestructible substance.

At home the forces of the Crown have been set, not only for the protection of the King's Throne, but for the maintenance of the King's peace, and in maintaining that peace soldiers would be quite careless as to whether the rioting were anti-Whig or anti-Tory. In the ferment of the General Strike, any corporal's guard would have cheerfully charged any Socialist crowd and would subsequently have been denounced as the tools of the capitalists; yet if the "King's Government" were being carried on, a Socialist Government would safely look to the soldier to keep order and repress revolt. When the temper of the army was roused in the pre-War Irish troubles, the Royal cause, and nothing else, was what officers and men were out to uphold.

Since the Great War there have been from time to time rumblings both within and without the daily press as to attempts made, by pamphlet or tract, to seduce troops from their allegiance. The rumblings have always died away, and no trace of the poison has ever been found in any military brain or breast. The plain fact is that the army, now as ever, is incorruptible to political ends, and even the most rabid Communists retain the few grains of common sense

to realise the fact. Nine out of ten foreign revolutions are military in origin, or start with the scheme of obtaining control of the army as the initial necessity. Nothing is more certain than that the British Regular Army would refuse point blank to be controlled by any other than its own officers responsible to the Crown. Fiery Communists have not been backward to declare that never would troops be brought to open fire on their class, their own flesh and blood: no supposition could be farther from the truth. Rifles would be busy, should need for them arise, as automatically as on the rifle-range for the annual classification. Just as the political general, to be found elsewhere, is a great rarity in England, so the soldier, the man of action, instinctively distrusts the politician—the man of words. During the General Election of 1919—the first in which the serving soldier, as such, had ever been allowed to vote—there were regiments who made bonfires on the village greens of France and fed them with their voting-papers—a scornful suggestion that the politician might do much to nullify a victory bought with the blood of a million good comrades. The loyalty of the army, like the honesty of the Prime Minister, should be taken as granted, but while the civilian is loyal to the principle of the monarchy, the soldier is loyal to the person of the monarch. The National Anthem played by a military band on parade is fraught with real significance: the stiffening of the military salute is something much more real than the casual hat-raising of the civilian male. “If he don’t move it, I’ll knock his —— head off as well”, is a threat a soldier has been often heard to mutter when a civilian has neglected—or has been slow—to remove his hat. The recruit’s oath of

attestation has for him far more meaning than might be popularly imagined. Later on—as wise commanding officers know—a man may deftly and deliberately prevaricate before a regimental enquiry or cheerfully perjure himself in a civilian court to help a friend; his oath to his King, if forgotten in words, is embedded in his scheme of life. Even in the barrack-room, free-est of atmospheres, the King's fair name is never mentioned with anything other than respect, and little as politics colour soldiers' talk, there is a tendency to profess Toryism, not because it is thought that a Conservative Government will be more efficient than any other, but because to the, perhaps uninformed, soldier's mind that political party is more than any other imbued with the Royalist spirit. The soldier's sole complaint about the Constitution of the kingdom is that the monarchy is not absolute enough; a complaint which was freely vented when, after the War, States were in the melting-pot, monarchies had been overset, and the wave of false prosperity at home had ebbed, leaving quicksands of despair and distress on every side. If it had been only a question of the adherence of the army, it might have been comparatively easy at that moment to set up an absolute dictatorship; the talk in the barrack-room, irresponsible but not insignificant, ran roughly on two lines: "Why don't the King chuck the lot (the politicians) and use the troops to run the country?" Or, "Why don't Haig go down and offer the army to the King? We'd soon show 'em what was what."

Wild words which even the hot-headed men flushed with victory knew could never be in any sense effective; but they struck the note of unswerving loyalty, not to the principle

of the Constitution but to the person of the King. At that juncture the soldier knew only two lodgments for his loyalty: the officer—typified by the man who had led him to victory in the field, and the exalted, if remote, individual to whom he had taken his oath.

There comes sometimes under discussion the hypothetical question of the relative loyalty that would be offered to a King or a President by the British Army. Underlying the point is the whole secret—and a vital one—of the success of the monarchical institution in Britain, as contrasted particularly with the crumbling of one after another of forms of government throughout the world, from the French Revolution to the overwhelming *débâcle* which followed the downfall of the Central Empires. If the success does not lie with the monarchy itself—there have been as bad kings in England as elsewhere—the fact remains that England is indubitably monarchical to its marrow; it is because of this national instinct that we can smile a little smugly at the breathings of the Communists and allow our agitators free speech in Hyde Park.

The only republic that was ever set up—and even then its supporters forbore to call it so—was an abhorrence, from its very inception, to the great majority of the nation. Like nearly all successful revolutions, it was that of a persistent minority, maintaining and being maintained by an army at first purely fanatic and latterly frankly mercenary. The monarchy was restored in Charles II. without bloodshed, and with hardly a dissentient voice. Between Cromwell and Charles there is no comparison in point of view of personal attributes. Cromwell is hated to this day, but reluctantly



admitted by the military student as a soldier ahead of his time. Charles is a popular hero to the very schoolboy, his very vices gilded and condoned. James II., a reactionary and a religious bigot, was ousted, not for a republic, but for a dour Dutchman. The first four Georges did no little to tarnish the diadem they wore, but their kingship was never challenged. Destiny must indeed have designed this country as a perpetual kingdom.

Nor because the British Sovereign is enthroned more securely than ever before must it be forgotten that disaffection—the word is comprehensive—had to be reckoned with even in the latter half of the last century. Echoes of republicanism floated in the air, the French Revolution was cited in ugly, if not obscure, quarters as the birth of the new world. While a Beale protested to the Reform League in Hyde Park that he was a citizen and not a subject, a Bradlaugh was frothily impeaching the House of Brunswick; and while Dilke and Auberon Herbert divided the Commons against the Civil List, Mr. John Morley in *Compromise* deprecated outward signs of reverence to Royalty. But before the 'seventies gave way to the 'eighties this anti-monarchical feeling, which was not more than skin deep, had disappeared. Queen Victoria, emerging from her seclusion, was no longer shrouding altogether her majesty under a double veil of mourning and mystery. The nearly fatal illness of the Prince of Wales at the end of 1871 had already disclosed a volume of feeling for the Crown and all that the Crown stood for, and Mr. Disraeli, three years later, quick to note how real was the bond between the monarch and the multitude, spared no effort to bring them into ever closer touch.



The army is a Royal army: royal in its creation, the nomenclature of almost every regiment having a Royal association, the glamour of the Royal service keeps it steadfast to its standards, gives a sure rallying point, and infuses a staunchness—bordering on stubbornness—scarcely to be found in any other armed force in Europe.

The rare military crime is now desertion. On active service in the last century it is unknown to us if it is to be found elsewhere. Wellington in Spain was astounded that a wave of crime, wholly foreign to his experience, should be spreading over his forces; he was scarcely more comfortable when statistics revealed that the deserters were mainly Irishmen. Yet the infamous German attempt to form an Irish Brigade among their prisoners of war was an abject failure.

In a militarist country, such as the Germany of the Hohenzollerns, or the France of Bonaparte, the great professional armies created schools of thought which were distinct forces in the lives of the nations. Here in England the term "professional soldier" is hardly admitted to usage. The majority of men joining the ranks (and their total forms but an infinitesimal entry in the census) do so for the shortest possible period, and then revert again to their old profession or enter a new one. During the Armistice, when every soldier's profession had to be registered in connection with the demobilisation scheme, a time-serving man who wrote "soldier" was sternly told that there was no such profession.

For the most part officers retire with the rank of Captain or mere Lieutenant. The military class, therefore, properly so called, must be limited to a very small group of old

soldiers, mostly N.C.O.'s and one or two clubs favoured by crusted Generals or Colonels. Yet a man, having once been in the army, never seems to lose its honourable brand, but is for ever an "old soldier"; he may serve but three or seven or eight years of his youth in a regiment, yet for the rest of his life his one boast is that he is an "old Grenadier" or "Buff" or "Scots Grey." What man who for three years has driven a milk-float boasts, "I may be a mere bricklayer now, but don't forget, in '04 I was driving Waters's milkcart." Or what man having for a term sold newspapers in the street, travels once every year of his remaining life to London to dine with the other employees of W. H. Smith? But no one, however he be Fortune's fool, forgets that he has belonged to the King's army.

We pride ourselves as a nation on being hard-headed. That is part of our pose. We are deliberately hard-headed because we dare not let our sentimentality get the better of us. The great mass of the middle classes—the classes that fill our houses of business, the magistrate's bench and the very House of Commons itself—is the most truly hard-headed, the most lacking in the national spirit of romance. It has schooled itself to impassivity, as it has schooled itself to the "Oxford accent" and six nights a week tennis. Only on such occasions as occurred with the great trial of strength does it permit itself to be roused into a display of the deeper feelings, but in the hour of England's need the middle class donned its khaki and fought as doughtily as the rest.

The middle classes were for long years sparsely represented in our peace-time Regular Army: the army was com-

posed of just those two sections of the nation for whom the monarchy has most appeal. The upper classes—the classes of the public schools, the classes with the right to bear coats of arms—these provided the majority of the officers of our regiments. The British officer wore his sword as one obeying an old instinct, and to rule his men, and to lead them in action, came as second nature to him. They held commission from their King as the ancestors of their class held their lands in return for service. A republic could produce schooled officers, officers who could quote you Julius Cæsar or Frederick the Great, who could work out trench systems for an army corps without the least hesitation, but they could hardly lead a British Army to victory in the manner of those who have served the Kings of Britain, as Kings, for centuries.

The whole rank and file of the army is, in origin, distinctly of that superb if so-called lower class, the class in which the sense of humour abounds and where the natural sentimentality of the nation is allowed full romantic sway. It was the class that stormed the recruiting-booths at the outbreak of war while the middle classes were still discussing leading articles in the *Daily Telegraph*. It is the class which needs something tangible on which it can feast its eyes, and is ready to appreciate a little judicious flag-waving; the class, if you wish, that flocks to the pavements to see the Lord Mayor's show, hardly understanding what it is all about, yet surely recognising that here is something which belongs to the soul of England, the England which is represented to them, not as a system of laws, not by Lords and Commons, but by the Union Jack, the National Anthem, and the "King in his golden crown".

Our army is so constructed—although not deliberately so—as to appeal to just that very class to whom it must look for the great majority of its recruits. The “50th” means little to the British soldier. Even when there was an infantry regiment called the “50th,” it was the “Gallant Half-Hundred” to the man in the ranks. But—the “Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment”—there’s a regiment to fight in if you like. The Queen’s Own, the King’s Own, the Duke of Cambridge’s Own—on such lines has the army been built up, and on such lines it will do and dare anything.

A grand little army—one with half the victories of the world flaunting from its banners. Over it rules a King, who knows that the army has done its full share in lifting him to supremacy among the rulers in the world. Here, so has run a rude remark, is no shirt-fronted president with a “nanny-goat beard” and bald head; no spectacled, anti-drink faddists, too proud to fight. Thank God, the soldier contentedly grunts as he drains his glass, for a real honest-to-goodness King, who is above tampering with such things as licensing laws, who looks like a ruler, who wears our own uniforms, who has a real crown and a sceptre, and who has a son to succeed him and take the salute of the army which, like the British Sovereign, never dies.

“How long does it take to clean the white sheepskin?” asked Queen Victoria of the trooper who had been paraded before her to exhibit some change in horse equipment. “Thirty hours, Your Majesty”, came the random reply of the startled soldier, who was not expecting to be directly addressed by so august a Personage. “That is too much work;

the Life Guards, I think, should have black sheepskins", was the Sovereign's sympathetic comment, and for many years to come one regiment of Life Guards could be easily distinguished from the other by the sheepskins which covered their saddles.

The military ceremonial, so dear to King George's immediate predecessors, has, from force of circumstances rather than choice, been curtailed. The Trooping of the Colour, the opening of Parliament, or such an event as the State inauguration of Wembley, are still adorned by the time-honoured ceremonial peculiar to the dignity of the British Crown, but no more call than is absolutely necessary is now made on the Household Troops for anything like ornamental service. It is probable that the soldier is quite agreeable to the diminution of his showier duty; it is certain that he is very grateful for the almost complete abolition—largely due to the King's enquiries and intervention—of hardships formerly taken as merely incidental to duty in connection with State functions. Certain facts were brought to the notice of the King by the Gold Stick, and certain decisions were quickly taken. The King, for instance, was to be told that the Sovereign's escort at Manchester in 1911 cost every individual trooper in it a matter of pounds. It rained most of the time—what else could it do if Manchester were to be true to its tradition? A rigid military custom of those days, however, ruled that in no circumstances should a Royal Escort be allowed to "cloak"—the cloaks being merely designed to be rolled and placed on the front arch of the saddle; thus on this afternoon every man ruined a scarlet tunic for which he was pecuniarily responsible, while he had



also to pay for the reburnishing of his cuirass at Birmingham. Under such conditions would Jonah himself have been uncomplaining? All cause of complaint on this score has now ceased. So rationally are affairs conducted that on more than one occasion the carriage procession to a Royal Levée at St. James's has been cancelled so that the Escort might not needlessly be subjected to the rude weather.

Any "grouching"—and after all grouching is a delightful military exercise—about State duties is now mainly confined to the preparatory part of the business, the getting ready in barracks, the parades under the ruthless eye of regimental authority. Once the party has left the barrack gates, every man is swept up into the great and glorious ceremonial which surrounds the Royal Personage. There is a personal thrill in it all to which no man taking part can fail to respond. The crash of arms as the infantry come to the salute, the almost continual blare of the Anthem, the very trampling and jingling within the ranks of the Escort itself, the tiny waving handkerchiefs over the heads of the black crowds—all combine to lift the spirit above the soberness of the mere workaday world into a fantasy escaping from the colourful traditions of history.

So too with the infantry employed to line the streets and provide Guards of Honour. At a period not very far distant, these unfortunates would be dragged from their beds long before daylight, chased by all and sundry, and probably find themselves at dawn shivering at the roadside, with empty stomachs and their name in the book for some real or fancied "crime." All this has been altered, and attendance on



the Sovereign is now arranged for with due regard for the weakness of human flesh.

Those who serve in the Household Troops are generally forward to say that no matter how many times they have taken part in similar functions there is something unexplainably glorious in the emerging of the great swinging State Coach from the archway of the Palace; the swerve of the brilliant Cavalry sections into positions, the stately procession down the Mall; the feeling that for a short hour they may, sword in hand, stand for the unswerving loyalty of an Army to its Chief.

The mind untouched by romance knows that such an Escort as visibly surrounds the Crown is futile in these days of firearms; the hearts of his subjects are the King's protection rather than the arms of his Bodyguard. Yet on the occasion of that opening of Parliament which Communists had threatened to disturb—rumour had it that the cloaks of the Lifeguardsmen were worn, not against the bitter cold of the day, but in order to conceal the khaki jackets and belted revolvers with which the troopers were to deal with a riot which did not materialise.

The man in the ranks is intensely interested, from a mere human point of view, in the particular ceremony in which he is taking part; he wants to see all that there is to be seen, and the military discipline which holds his eyes fast to the front is often a sore trial to his human side. By reason of the construction of the Palace and the conformation of many of the London streets, it is quite possible for a trooper to perform Escort duty and never so much as

catch a glimpse of the Personage on whom he is in attendance.

The miniature review, however, which takes place inside the quadrangle of the Palace immediately after every Escort, is accepted by the men as the gracious "Thank you" of their King; out of view of the public, the Cavalry Escort and Infantry Guard of Honour rank by their Sovereign and Colonel-in-Chief as he stands, surrounded by his officers of State, on the steps leading to his apartments. There is a private—even a homely—touch about the little ceremony which marks the close relations of King and Army, as well as the personal nature of the duty upon which the troops have been engaged, and the intimate standing of the Household Troops in particular.

The troops, regarding the King rather as a military chieftain than as the Head of a political or even constitutional State, are keenly, if quite respectfully, critical of his personal appearance on this or that occasion.

No one, however exalted, who is rooted in the affections of the soldier, can escape a nickname. King George is—again without a shadow of disrespect—the "Old Gentleman." The march past in the quadrangle is as much—perhaps more—an inspection of the King by the troops as the converse. "The 'old gentleman' looked smart to-day"—"The 'old gentleman' wasn't half fed-up,"—such are the expressions which may be heard back in barracks, when the trappings of ceremony are flung on to the beds.

"Germany who planned the war to gain the supremacy of the world, full of pride in her armed strength and of con-

tempt for the small British Army of that day, has been forced to acknowledge her defeat. Soldiers of the British Empire, with your allied comrades you have won the war." So ran the felicitous message of the British King—and the worth of the words was anyhow burnt into every man who took part in the great post-war Salutes.

There lies before me a letter written by one then belonging to "Other Ranks" who had from end to end of the war fought in the firing lines.

No one not having actually fought hard can realise what these triumphs meant to the men in the ranks; of all the moments the one that counted most was the short swing through the forecourt, past the dais where stood the sturdy figure of the man in whose name the legions had gone forward to war. There was the tense half-hour of waiting and being marshalled in the streets behind the Palace: at last, the sharp order, the crash of drum and brass, the dull tramp of feet and the cheers of the crowds ahead, the word of command which turned all eyes to the King. His curt, yet ample, gesture of thanks was fitting guerdon for four years of fighting. Be it confessed, in spite of political heroics and recruiting posters, it was not for Belgium, or from any particular sense of right and wrong, that the average man fought. It was for the safety of his country and the glory of his King.

## CHAPTER XIX

### IRELAND

**I**N the whole of Queen Victoria's reign less than five weeks was spent in Ireland, and during fifty-nine of her sixty-three years of rule, she never set foot there at all. The visit to Dublin in her last year has been rightly described as a triumph of robust old age, but it brought into high relief earlier and protracted neglect.

In 1871 Mr. Gladstone told the Queen that he proposed to introduce a measure abolishing the political colour of the Viceroy of Ireland so that a really popular representative of the Sovereign might be found in the person of the Heir to the Throne; the Queen indignantly bade the Minister to dismiss the idea from his mind. The Queen's opposition to the notion may have been due less to her fears for her son's safety in a disturbed country than to the feeling that such a course might transfer to him some fraction of her own dignities. Another reason was at the time suggested on which it would be ungracious to insist, and which it would have been easy to refute. The Puritans, we are told, condemned bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators. The Sovereign, it was unkindly murmured, looked askance at her Minister's proposal, not only because her son's life might

thereby be imperilled, but because a large feather would thereby be placed in Ireland's cap. In the eyes of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, "risk" was a thing only to be considered in order to be laughed at, and in this year, 1871, despite the dynamite outrages of Irish-American desperadoes on Government buildings, the Prince—accompanied by the Princess—repeated his visit of six years earlier, the Queen's objection to the excursion being overruled by a timely reminder, though unofficial, from Mr. Disraeli to her that in 200 years English kings had only spent twenty-one days in Ireland altogether.

For some time the Prince of Wales was more than anxious either to occupy a Royal residence in Ireland or to assume the suggested office of supreme governor, freed from all political associations, but the Queen's dislike of both proposals doomed them to failure, and eventually had the effect of damping her son's belief in them. Four times—in 1865, 1868, 1871 and in 1885—the Queen sanctioned short sojourns of her Heir in Ireland, but the Prince then reached the conclusion that brief visits to the Lord Lieutenant gave too little scope for the exercise of his personal influence to warrant their continuance.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly before his accession King Edward expressed the wish that with Lord Cadogan's retirement his own eldest

<sup>1</sup>Lord Wolseley when commanding the forces in Ireland in 1891 told the Duke of Clarence that nothing could be more beneficial to the country than that the future Heir to the Throne should be the next Viceroy. The proposal was not lightly dismissed, and the Duke in answer wrote: "All that you say about my taking the post of Lord-Lieutenant would no doubt be a popular move in many quarters." With characteristic modesty the young Prince added: "It would be a very difficult position for me to fill adequately."

son should be appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; Lord Salisbury was at once to dash cold water on the proposal by the reminder that the Lord-Lieutenant "is obliged to spend from £15,000 to £20,000 per year in excess of his official income", a reminder which did nothing to deter Lord Dudley<sup>1</sup> from accepting the reversion to the office.

A suggestion was renewed in 1902 on the treble lines originally suggested to Queen Victoria, but Mr. Lecky, the Irish historian, drew up so hostile a memorandum that the subject was pigeon-holed. After he ascended the throne King Edward was anxious to cross the Irish Channel as quickly as possible, but circumstances connected with the South African War induced him to postpone his Royal Visit until after his Coronation; the occasion then proved so blazing a success that it was repeated less than twelve months later.

The Prince of Wales was more than pleased that his two sons should take part on the Queen's behalf in the Dublin celebrations of the Queen's Jubilee in June 1887, and the young Princes performed a not too easy task with a tact which must have been ingrained rather than the fruit of experience. Ten years later the Duke and Duchess of York, to mark the Diamond Jubilee, travelled as representatives of the Queen and the Prince over much the same Irish ground as the Prince and Princess of Wales had traversed in 1885; wherever they went they gained every ounce of approval which could be won; they made a distinct, if not permanent, contribution to the severe task of pacifying Ireland, and they

<sup>1</sup>The Earl of Dudley was Viceroy in 1902-1905 during which period his expenditure was on a peculiarly generous scale.



could, and did, tell their rather anxious relatives of the genuine warmth of their reception.<sup>1</sup>

An interim visit had been less happy; it was while staying with the 10th Hussars at the Curragh that Prince George contracted the fever to which he nearly succumbed. It was then and thus that within three short months, two lives of cardinal importance to the nation, and in the process of events to the world at large, hung on a thread; in one case the thread of life was snapped, and, if in the will of Providence the days of the younger Prince had also been cut short, the reversion to the Crown would have passed immediately to the Duchess of Fife to devolve upon her eldest daughter; a succession which would then have been unique in European history, though a parallel is now furnished in Holland.

King Edward's last visit to Ireland in 1907, a year after the collapse of Mr. Balfour's Government, was marked by the unfortunate, and very inodorous, incident of the theft of the State Jewels of St. Patrick, as to which—more especially in respect of the languid attempts to trace the thief—the King expressed himself in very forceful terms. For the period during which he was Heir Apparent to the Throne, his son

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after their return from Ireland, the Duke and Duchess were to suffer a very real loss in the death of the Duchess of Teck. Through many, and often difficult years the Duchess of Teck and her daughter had been close and constant companions and from first to last no note of slightest discord was ever struck between them. The kindly Duchess of Teck, greatest of "grandes dames", spent most of her time and many of her best efforts in quarters where poverty and suffering walk together, and here as everywhere her coming was always rapturously greeted. Few personages have ever achieved such a measure of popularity alike in England and abroad as the Princess who, it may be remembered, was for a considerable period almost the only representative of the Royal House to be seen in London.

only kept indirect, but always understanding, touch with Irish affairs, though with the advent of Home Rule on the *tapis*, Irish affairs reflected themselves on many phases of social life. In Parliament there was always the comfortable feeling that however mordant the words Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour might exchange with one another across the floor of the House, their differences would be happily composed on the golf course the next morning; but there were others who coloured their whole outlook with their views on Ireland. Just as in 1878, when Lord Beaconsfield returned from Berlin, it was impossible for a hostess to get anyone to meet Mr. Gladstone, then at the height of his unpopularity, at dinner, so now Lord and Lady Londonderry would excuse themselves from obeying a command to Windsor Castle for Ascot Races, alleging the impossibility of meeting in friendly intercourse the official champions of Home Rule, and even on the mutual ground of Embassies "difficult" situations would occur.<sup>1</sup>

If King George had been long absent from Ireland he was anyhow determined that Dublin should be the first place on his list for a call after the Coronation, and on July 8, with the Queen, the Prince of Wales and Princess Mary,

<sup>1</sup> As a child the King would have heard how Party feeling at times rose to such fever heat that Whigs and Tories conceived of one another not only as mistaken politicians, but as bad men. "Mama", an infant Whig, who had heard nothing but abuse of the Tories, was said to have lisped, "Are Tories born wicked or do they grow wicked." Perhaps the highest point of the Tory thermometer was reached when Tory ladies, exasperated by the Queen's Whiggish bias, hissed the Sovereign—who could still plead that she was "very young"—at Ascot races.

The Prince Consort may not rank as an attractive figure in British memory, but to do him justice he did try to sweeten the mutual bitterness of political parties, and to enlist Whig and Tory in the work of maintaining the Crown against any possible outbreak of Republican feeling.

he landed at Kingstown, to drive eight miles through crowds, rosy with pleasure and excited with cheering, to Dublin Castle, then to visit two colleges, one new and one old, and wind up a well-planned day by watching races in Phoenix Park. The next day being Sunday the King made proof of his courtesy no less than of his piety; after attending morning prayers in the Cathedral, the King and Queen visited Maynooth College, the grant to which fifty years earlier had so seriously troubled Mr. Gladstone's scruples, and were there received by the Cardinal Primate and the Archbishop of Dublin.

An enormous levée was the morning's work of the morrow, and a minor reverse was to mark the afternoon's occasion as the King's horse, to general disappointment and some surprise, was beaten in the Leopardstown races; that night an investiture followed the State banquet, and two peers, whose paths in life were widely different but equally honourable, were dubbed Knights of the Order of St. Patrick; the choice of Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Kitchener for the honour <sup>1</sup> had been very felicitous, the one being a greatly respected territorial magnate, and the other claiming Ireland, if only by accident, as his birthplace.

The last day was fully taken up by a review of 16,000 troops in Phoenix Park, a garden party at Viceregal Lodge, and a Court at the Castle; before leaving Ireland for Wales on July 12, the King left £1000 for the benefit of the poor of Dublin, while Lord Iveagh, who seemed no less disposed

<sup>1</sup>Two years earlier a recommendation pressed upon King Edward was so unpopular that the Knights declined to attend the investiture of their new colleague who had consequently to be privately invested by the Viceroy.

to concentrate than to distribute his munificence, placed £50,000 at His Majesty's disposal to be expended on the hospitals of the Irish capital.

For the first two years of his reign the King's name was kept outside the area of Irish politics, but in the prolonged Irish imbroglio of 1914-21, as in the contention around the Parliament Bill, it was his lot to be made a counter and factor in the party debates. "One of the most influential points in the case of the opponents of the Parliament Bill was the assurance that the first use of the Bill would be to force a Home Rule Bill through without further appeal to the country." So with perfect candour wrote Lord Morley, who favoured Home Rule as much as he disfavoured taking up arms against Germany. The connection between the Parliament Bill and Home Rule was direct, obvious and unmistakable, and by May 1914 Mr. Asquith's Irish Home Rule Bill was qualified under the Parliament Act to receive the Royal Assent, the House of Commons having passed it through all its stages three times in order to supply the want of concurrence on the part of the House of Lords. The Bill proposed to set up a single Parliament for Ireland with full authority over everything except the Crown, the Army and the Navy, peace and war, and certain reserved services. But meantime a situation which involved an ugly possibility of civil war in Ireland induced the Prime Minister to promise that the Home Rule Bill would not be presented for the Royal assent until there had been passed an amending Bill to give the Ulster counties the option of cutting themselves for a period out of the Bill. Ulster was drilling a large volun-

teer force to give armed resistance to Home Rule, and the rest of Ireland was trying to respond with equal effect; there had been gun-running incidents North and South with some bloodshed, and evidence abounded at the Curragh Camp that British soldiers were not prepared to "crush" an Ulster resistance to what Ulster regarded as a gross act of injustice.

It would appear that Sir Henry Wilson, the Director of Military Operations, who was in sharp political opposition to the Government—although, of course, to some considerable extent in their confidence—did something to let officers know that the penalty of resignation would only be temporary, as with the return of a Conservative political party to power their commissions would be returned forthwith. Things were drifting into what might constitute a grave situation, and the King took a bold step. On July 18 he had travelled with the Prime Minister to Portsmouth, where the most powerful fleet ever assembled, numbering some 200 vessels in all, was drawn up in eight lines, extending over some twenty-two miles altogether, and manned by some 70,000 officers and men. The forces afloat were supplemented by five squadrons of four sea-planes each, with a squadron of eight aeroplanes and four airships. The King was able to witness the illumination of the fleet on Saturday evening; on the Sunday he visited some of the ships informally; and the next morning the ships moved to sea past the Royal yacht, as did a procession of aircraft, and, after witnessing tactical exercises, the King returned to London late on Monday evening. The display and assemblage proved to have an unforeseen value, but the visit, which was greatly to the



King's liking, had to be curtailed for the reason that he had decided to summon to Buckingham Palace on the 22nd a conference<sup>1</sup> of representatives of the Government, the Opposition, the Irish Nationalists and Ulster Unionists. The King, as convener, welcomed the Conference with a few words which provoked considerable comment, and in certain places some little resentment. "My intervention at this moment may be regarded as a new departure. But the exceptional circumstances under which you are brought together justify my action. For months we have watched with deep misgivings the course of events in Ireland. The trend has been surely and steadily towards an appeal to force, and to-day the cry of Civil War is on the lips of the most responsible and sober-minded of my people. . . . My apprehension in contemplating such a dire calamity is intensified by my feelings of attachment to Ireland and of sympathy with her people, who have always welcomed me with warm-hearted affection. . . . Your responsibilities are indeed great. The time is short. You will, I know, employ it to the fullest advantage, and be patient, earnest and conciliatory in

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Simon said at Manchester of the Conference: "If we do not maintain strictly the view that the King reigns but not governs, that the King acts upon the advice of his Ministers and takes no part or side—if we do not maintain that view we cannot avoid getting into a position in which the Crown might be criticised by some of its subjects and acclaimed by others as though it were some party asset. That can never be so. So long as we are determined to maintain—and I am very certain the King is equally determined to maintain—the true doctrine of the Constitution that every public act of the Crown is an act for which his advisers are responsible, then, if that action does not meet with the approval of the country, it is his advisers and Ministers who ought to be blamed, and all the time the King will remain the representative of the whole community, never exposed to the risk either of criticism or of adulation, because common loyalty to the Sovereign is the way in which constitutional Englishmen express their attachment to the Constitution under which they live."



view of the magnitude of the interests at stake." Surely no speech could more thoroughly belie the saying of Charles James Fox that if a speech reads well it must be a damned bad speech. But, as must often have happened at this period, the King proposed, and his servants, tugging in different directions, disposed; four meetings sufficed to demonstrate that agreement, either in principle or in detail, was out of the question, and the Conference broke up.

There were, however, to be heard what politicians like to call "repercussions." Why had the King's speech been published? some Members of Parliament asked, while others shook their heads and would like to know what His Majesty meant by "Civil War" and the "most responsible and sober-minded of his people". Mr. Asquith, when challenged, shifted any responsibility to his own shoulders; the speech, he said, had been sent to him in the ordinary way to be overhauled, and the Conference had decided unanimously in favour of its publication.

With the outbreak of the War Home Rule receded like a mirage, and before the War was a year old the Prime Minister had to invite some of his colleagues to place at his disposal their portfolios, which he handed to prominent men in the Conservative party. Mr. Redmond and his immediate group lost touch with their countrymen, who had formed new organisations and conceived new ambitions amidst the illimitable possibilities of the War. Even amid all the troubles of war, Ireland was for the next five or six years still to be an engrossing problem, of which the short-lived rebellion of April 1916 was an ugly feature. Conscription was then

being applied to Great Britain but not to Ireland, where the very suggestion of such a thing produced threatening and insulting murmurs, and troops and weapons of war solely needed to deal with England's brutal enemy must be employed to keep England's sister quiet. In the spring of 1918, when Sir Douglas Haig's requirements were, by force of dire events, burnt into Mr. Lloyd George's <sup>1</sup> mind, the twin questions of Irish conscription and a new Home Rule scheme were seriously broached but no substantial answer was to be given, and at the General Election of 1918 Ireland dismissed the old Nationalist Party and elected instead eighty Sinn Feiners who never attended the Imperial Parliament. Sinn Fein outrages reached their height in 1920, and one of the leaders of the Irish Republican Army, Mr. McSwiney, having received sentence of two years' imprisonment, was lodged in Brixton Gaol in August and started upon a hunger strike. After some days Mr. John Redmond's nephew appealed to the King to intervene; instead of the usual official acknowledgment by the Home Secretary, the Private Secretary was instructed to write that the King fully realised the services rendered and the sacrifices made by Mr. Redmond's family in the cause of reconciliation between the two races, and that the appeal would receive immediate and careful attention. A week later a London Member of Parliament was moved to urge His Majesty to take "an unconventional step." Lord Stamfordham's pen was again employed in reply:

Even if the King were in favour of such a course it could only be effected by the Sovereign's personal action

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lloyd-George succeeded Mr. Asquith as Prime Minister Dec. 1916.

in the face of the advice of his Ministers and with the presumable result of their resignation, also the further risk that the country at large might regard the price paid as too high for the object attained, and blame His Majesty for creating a grave political crisis at a time of special national stress and anxiety.

Mr. McSwiney did not succumb to his hunger until the twenty-fourth day of his fast; different explanations were subsequently put out as to his long survival, and it became pretty evident that he had no claim to any crown of martyrdom. The action of the Government, which the King, however he might do violence to his own kind heart, declined to thwart, definitely ended the policy of hunger strike, as in November of the same year the President of Sinn Fein called off a hunger strike at Cork Gaol, telling the prisoners that they had given sufficient proof of their devotion and fidelity. One hideous outrage succeeded another, and the year closed with a new Home Rule Act which repealed Mr. Asquith's Act and set up two Parliaments in Ireland, one for Ulster and the other for the rest of the country. Only the Ulster Parliament ever met under this Act, the Sinn Feiners in the South carrying on a Government of their own with fine contempt for the Imperial Parliament, and wanton acts of violence persisted until at length a decision—no less wise than daring—of the King was to afford an opportunity for making a new departure.

Deep were the misgivings throughout Great Britain when it was known that the King intended to go to Belfast himself to open the first Parliament of Northern Ireland, but

misgivings were drowned in admiration when it was further announced that he was to be accompanied by the Queen. A black pall of the worst kind of warfare was isolating Ireland from the rest of the world, and the Royal visit was a bold adventure, only to be justified by its signal success. The King arrived on board the *Victoria and Albert* early on the morning of the 22nd June accompanied by a naval escort, and was loudly cheered when, accompanied by the Queen, he came ashore and drove away. The chief ceremony of the day took place in the Belfast City Council Chamber, which had been converted for the occasion into a Senate House. The benches nearest to the front were occupied by Senators of the Northern Parliament and their ladies. After the Commons had been summoned, the King read his speech. The speech was too long and too grave to be entrusted to memory, but the King's intonation was said to be faultless, and he gave to every phrase a meaning which showed that, if the draft was not from his own pen, the words were inspired by no other mind, and that these words proceeded from the heart no less than from the head.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“For all who love Ireland, as I do with all my heart, this is a profoundly moving occasion in Irish history. My memories of the Irish people date back to the time when I spent many happy days in Ireland as a midshipman. My affection for the Irish people has been deepened by successive visits since that time, and I have watched with constant sympathy the course of their affairs. I could not have allowed myself to give Ireland by deputy alone my earnest prayers and good wishes in the new era which opens with this ceremony, and I have therefore come in person, as Head of the Empire, to inaugurate this Parliament on Irish soil. I inaugurate it with deep felt hope, and I feel sure that you will do your utmost to make it an instrument of happiness and good government for all parts of the community which you represent.

“This is a great and critical occasion in the history of the Six Counties, but not for the Six Counties alone, for everything which interests them touches Ireland, and everything which touches Ireland finds an echo in the remotest

Some of what he said in the Northern Parliament the King repeated in the Ulster Hall where he read a general reply to a number of addresses presented to him, and reiterated the plea that one and all should be ready to work in harmony for the common good. Throughout the day there was no suggestion of any untoward incident, and the elaborate police precautions—the only part of the proceedings in which the King took but slender interest—seemed to have been scarcely necessary; vociferous cheering met him wherever he went, and on the following day London gave him a shout of welcome and heaved a sigh of relief at the Sovereign's escape from a danger, which was perhaps largely imaginary and which anyhow presented no terrors to him.

parts of the Empire. Few things are more earnestly desired throughout the English-speaking world than a satisfactory solution of the age-long Irish problems which for generations embarrassed our forefathers, as they now weigh heavily upon us. Most certainly there is no wish nearer my own heart than that every man of Irish birth, whatever be his creed, and whatever be his home, should work in loyal co-operation with the free communities on which the British Empire is based. . . .

. . . "The eyes of the whole Empire are on Ireland to-day—that Empire in which so many nations and races have come together in spite of ancient feuds, and in which new nations have come to birth within the lifetime of the youngest in this hall. I am emboldened by that thought to look beyond the sorrow and the anxiety which have clouded of late my vision of Irish affairs. I speak from a full heart when I pray that my coming to Ireland to-day may prove to be the first step towards an end of strife amongst her people, whatever their race or creed.

"In that hope I appeal to all Irishmen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and to forget, and to join in making for the land which they love a new era of peace, contentment and good will. . . . The future lies in the hands of my Irish people themselves. May this historic gathering be the preface of a day in which the Irish people, North and South, under one Parliament, or two, as those Parliaments may themselves decide, shall work together in common love for Ireland upon the sure foundation of mutual justice and respect."



But the Belfast speech, with all its melody, was to have a discordant echo overseas. The American Press is admittedly adventurous, and just now the American Press rather overstepped the mark. Early in June Lord Northcliffe—the darling of journalistic fortune, but who had never enjoyed the breezes of Court favour—started on a world tour which he fondly believed would stir the world to its depths. For some time there had circulated in American newspapers assertions to the effect that the King was taking a line of his own with regard to Ireland, and it was now confidently added by some more enterprising journalists that the Belfast speech had been made without consultation with the British Cabinet. Lord Northcliffe, who had made America the first stage of his Odyssey, was now credited with the statement that the King had asked Mr. Lloyd George: "Are you going to shoot all the people in Ireland? You must come to some agreement with them. I cannot have my people killed in this fashion." The imaginary interview had obtained currency in English newspapers, and it was of course necessary to give to it a flat *démenti*. In the House of Commons, therefore, the Prime Minister read out a repudiation on the King's behalf:

His Majesty the King has had his attention directed to certain statements reporting an interview with Lord Northcliffe appearing in the *Daily Mail* and reproduced in the *Daily Express* and some of the Irish newspapers. The statements contained in the report are a complete fabrication. No such conversations as those which are alleged took place, nor were any such remarks as those which are alleged made by His Majesty.



His Majesty also desires it to be made quite clear, as the contrary is suggested in the interview, that in his speech to the Parliament of Northern Ireland he followed the invariable constitutional practice relating to speeches from the Throne in Parliament.

The so-called "repudiation" was not one of the King's happiest pronouncements, and seemed to bear upon its face the impression of the Prime Minister's rather rough handwriting; to Mr. Lloyd George the bare suggestion that the King had sought to impose his Royal will was intolerable and must be crushed forthwith.

Of the two Collects which are set before the Communion Service, the first was supposed to teach the divine right of Kings and the second the limitations of Royal authority. If the attention of a Prime Minister, who seemed just now to be clutching at something like autocracy, had been called to these nuances he would surely have bestowed his benediction on the prayer said to be of Whig origin, and would have done his best to delete, or let lapse into desuetude, a petition supposed to carry a Tory complexion. Lord Northcliffe, whose memory was beginning to play him sorry tricks, but whose veracity was not to be questioned, denied the interview *in toto*, and the retainer, who was supposed to have spoken with his master's voice, protested that the version published differed entirely from the observations he had made.

Following the King's speech Sinn Fein and Ulster representatives had conferences with Mr. Lloyd George in London, and to Southern Ireland there was offered the status of a British Dominion, an offer which evoked cordial applause

in the American newspapers and brought a message of congratulations from the Holy See. The Pope telegraphed his good wishes to the King, who, in the course of a very correct reply, referred to the Irish nation as "my people". This was too much for Mr. De Valera, who hotly asserted himself in an autographed telegram—to which the Pope paid not the slightest attention—assuring the Vicar of Christ that Ireland was an independent State and owed no allegiance to the British King.

Negotiations, from some of which there steamed a rather unsavoury odour, dragged on for many months, until in the dark hours of the morning of December 6, 1921, the British and Irish representatives signed a treaty giving Southern Ireland the position of a free Dominion in the Empire; the Irish Assembly, known as Dail Eireann, ratified the treaty a month later and British military occupation in Dublin was then withdrawn. But the era of blood was not over; the angel of peace may have begun to hover over Ireland, but the healing of his wings was not yet to be felt. The Irish Government was still to be involved in a life and death struggle with all that suggests chaos and hatred, and before the final settlement was six months old, Sir Henry Wilson, the arch-antagonist of Home Rule, had been slain by Irishmen on his doorstep in London, while two months later the head of the Irish State Government, Mr. Michael Collins, was murdered in Dublin.

Time was required and hot blood must cool considerably before the King's speech in Belfast could be stabilised, and before there could be found anything like a full response to the plea he then so finely uttered.

## CHAPTER XX

### A GERMAN CHALLENGE

ARMY manœuvres in 1911, fixed as usual for early September, were cancelled ostensibly on account of the drought, which was obviously a thin excuse, as the drought ceased altogether the day before the announcement. The crisis of Agadir, however, which set Europe agog a month earlier, slowly fizzled out, but had done something to strengthen the bonds between the two countries who were the objects of Germany's dislike, and incidentally had caused a man of future importance to come to the front in France. M. Caillaux, the then French Premier, who was a financial genius rather than a statesman, had been sufficiently indiscreet to indulge in private negotiations with Berlin without the knowledge of his Foreign Minister, M. de Selves; telegrams from Berlin to the German Paris Embassy, deciphered by the French Foreign Office, brought knowledge of these negotiations to M. de Selves, to whom the knowledge that he did not apparently possess the full confidence of his political chief came as an unpleasant shock. Although there was nothing intrinsically unpatriotic in M. Caillaux's negotiations, the incident gave cause for rumours of an unflattering description. M. Caillaux resigned early in 1912 and was promptly replaced by M. Raymond Poincaré.

Indirectly also Agadir was to encourage Italy to reach out for Tripoli. This was by no means to French taste, but Italian diplomatists astutely saw that neither France nor England were in a position to resist Italian pretensions, and that the latter country might have its work cut out to maintain neutrality and cork down national feeling in Egypt. Count Isvolsky, as Russian Foreign Minister, had been replaced by M. Sazonoff, a Slav of Slavs, eager to play a part of first-rate importance, and no less eager to pull out Russian plums from a Balkan pie. Sazonoff was full of imagination, but lacking in precision: sometimes overflowing with energy, sometimes hesitating and irresolute. The traditional rôle of Teuton and Latin seems to have been curiously inverted just now in the persons of the men of the moment who were daily brought under the King's notice. The unpractical Sazonoff, the shilly-shallying Bethmann-Hollweg contrast curiously with the hard-headed, clear-sighted Latins, Poincaré and Giolitti.<sup>1</sup>

Whether or no German naval rivalry with England was alluded to in conversation during the Kaiser's visit in May 1911, here was a subject which, looming ever larger even in the eye of the man in the street, must have frequented the inner thoughts of a King whose mind was constantly directed seawards. Was war in the near future the purpose of a continuously increasing foreign fleet, and was Great Britain the prey which that fleet had in view? "Our Future lies on the Water", and, "What my Grandfather did for the Army, that will I do for the Navy", were great, swelling

<sup>1</sup> Signor Giolitti resigned the Premiership just before the war.

words, in which was embedded a menace which no King of England, even if he were not a Sailor King, could fail to appreciate at its sinister value. Scanning the designs of the German battleships with a seaman's eye, King George could not but note that these vessels—massively armoured and sacrificing as they did high speed, fuel supply, and so forth to purely tactical considerations—were being built for a “short range” war.

The question of German naval hostility had, of course, become acute with the sudden despatch of the *Panther* to Agadir, a closed port in Morocco in which there were no Germans and little trade, although “to protect German traders” was the ostensible mission of the German warship. Sir Edward Grey's warning on July 4, which the King had approved, was left unanswered. Great Britain, so ran the message, could not be disinterested in Morocco; she must take into consideration her own interests and treaty obligations; the despatch of *Panther* had created a new situation; we could not recognise any arrangement which might be come to without us. Mr. Lloyd George's fiery speech at the Mansion House came a fortnight later: “. . . if a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests were vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.” The effect was immediate. Germany disclaimed aggressive designs in Morocco, and hurried to explain that the *Panther* had been sent to Agadir on account of an attack by natives on a German



farm. The story of this very opportune attack was quite new to Sir Edward Grey, and the German Ambassador, Count Metternich, admitted that he himself had only just heard of it.

The British Minister's firm and cold demeanour must have come as an unpleasant shock when reported to the Kaiser. Germany had recently browbeaten Russia over Bosnia-Herzegovina, and had previously humiliated France at Algeciras; she had looked to repeat these successes with entire ease. Now in the act of cocking a pistol at France, she found England at her elbow likely to upset her aim. The Berlin press lashed itself in fury; but the British Government was so evidently determined to intervene if France were wantonly attacked, that Germany decided to proceed no further.

It was an altered Ministry which met Parliament in October, and a very far-reaching, and perhaps far-seeing, move was made in the appointment of Mr. Winston Churchill to the Admiralty. Before leaving for India, the King could assure himself (as three years later he could congratulate himself) that nothing would be left undone which vigilant care and, if necessary, vigorous action could do to ensure the efficiency of the navy as a fighting force. On the 10th November, the King formally announced his departure, and appointed Prince Arthur of Connaught, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor and the Lord President of the Council to be Counsellors of State, but without power to confer titles or take action in any matter reserved beforehand for the Royal approval, or—as the rather unnecessary corollary ran—thought by them to require it.



## CHAPTER XXI

### INDIA

THE King's sense of duty is beyond praise and beyond compare; if only he had King Edward's gift of imagination." Some such sentence would trip a little lightly off many a tongue, and perhaps not without some measure of justification; yet perhaps King Edward never conceived, even if he knew he could not have fulfilled, any idea so daring and so vividly coloured as a Coronation Durbar,<sup>1</sup> with the Viceroy for a moment set gently aside, and the King-Emperor receiving in person the homage of a huge Empire.

India! What does the name signify to ninety-nine out of a hundred of us, beyond a triangle, coloured red, upon the map of Asia? We are told that the said triangle measures nineteen hundred miles in length from north to south, and about the same in breadth, at its widest

<sup>1</sup> "To the Princes and People of India" the King had addressed a message soon after his accession in which occurred the phrase "by the wish of His Majesty and following his own example, I visited India five years ago accompanied by my Royal Consort. We became personally acquainted with great kingdoms known to History, with monuments and a civilisation older than our own; with ancient customs and ways of life; with native rulers; with the peoples, the cities, towns and villages throughout those vast territories. Never can either the vivid impressions or the affectionate associations of that wonderful journey vanish or grow dim."

point, from east to west; and that it contains an area rather larger than Europe west of the Vistula. The statement conveys little to us. We accept it as undoubtedly true, and, if we look at a map of India superimposed upon one of Europe of the same scale, we are perhaps a little staggered. But we in our little island are accustomed to reckon by acres, not by thousands of square miles: and strive as we may against the tendency, we find ourselves always attempting to apply our own puny standards to things Asiatic. We hear of great rivers, and instinctively recall the Thames at London Bridge, forgetting that a great Indian river in full flood would fill the space from Westminster to the Crystal Palace. We are told of mighty mountains, and commit to memory the fact that some of them soar to twice the height of Mont Blanc: we are aware, perhaps, that they form a barrier practically impassable by man along the immense northern frontier of India; possibly we may even realise with awe that they make the vast reservoir of water, in the form of snow, which makes the great rivers already mentioned. So much we may gather from our maps. But there is one thing more. This red-coloured triangle contains three hundred and twenty-million people—one-fifth, as it is reckoned, of the men, women and children living upon this planet.

A fair summary, perhaps, from a purely geographical point of view. Yet, do we really regard India as a mere "triangle, coloured red, upon the map of Asia?" India is the only possession of size which represents the Imperial as contrasted to the strictly Colonial ideal of the British Empire. Australia, Canada, and to a great extent South Africa, have all been absorbed more by way of peaceful

penetration than by the exploitation of armed force. India is a possession of the Crown, gained by the sheer valour of our forefathers, held by the vigilant valour of servants of the Crown of to-day. India is no mere red triangle, for here is our own representation of the glories of the Orient. India is as fragrant in our hearts as the ancient spice ships of John Company—itsself resting mainly on the arms of its soldiers. India is pock-marked by battlefields on which the glories of our arms have been maintained. India to-day is, but for a few Britons, a land of labour questions, colour questions, caste questions or questions of self-government and representation. For the vast majority of England's population it is still the "brightest jewel in the Crown of England"—for a goodly portion the glamorous land where "father commanded the 171st in '84", or "where young Tom" is during the greater part of his "nine years with the colours."

Through long centuries India has been distracted by countless foreign invasions, rent by the varying jealousies of military houses, and despoiled by the devices of politicians with nests that needed luxurious feathering. Rajputs, Greeks, Parthians, Mahomedans, Moguls, and Mahrattas—in countless hordes—have swept up and down the country; within three centuries thirty-four kings of five different houses ruled at Delhi. Of them, twelve met with violent end. Yet in 1600 was born in far-off England that Company of traders which was to be the instrument to bring all these warring elements under one supreme sway, a Company which was to burst its bounds and be finally lost in the British India of to-day.

The King's proposal to visit, before the end of the year, his Indian dominions, when announced by himself in Parliament on February 6 gave surprise to everybody and a slight shock to not a few: there was a hum of rather uninformed comment and the wisdom of the step was the subject of nervous query; but if the King had ever entertained any doubts on the matter, he must have been well satisfied that the idea, which was in very truth his own, was applauded by all whose experience entitled their opinions to consideration. The Indian tour was to be the culminating point of the Coronation ceremonies, and the culminating point of the tour was to be the Durbar at Delhi, a city soon to be restored—though the secret of this was still locked in the King's bosom—to proud eminence among the capitals of the world.

The public journals, while on the whole heartily approving the King's resolve, were a little irritating with reiteration that ninety years had elapsed since a British Sovereign had visited his overseas dominions. Comparisons are often unhappy, and nothing could be less felicitous than any analogy between George V. "celebrating in his Indian dominions the solemnity of the Coronation" (so ran the sonorous sentence) and the jog-trot visits of the earlier Georges to their estates in Hanover.

The vessel selected for the voyage was the *Medina*, the last word of the P. and O. Company, manned for the nonce by Royal Naval ratings, a contingent of Royal Marines 250 strong, and the band of the Royal Marine Artillery.

The suite was carefully chosen from both within and

without the Royal Household. The Duke of Teck's<sup>1</sup> unrivalled and almost uncanny knowledge of officers, whether in the British or Indian Army, and his mastery of all the intricacies of military etiquette, would serve him well as personal Aide-de-Camp. For Lord Durham<sup>2</sup>—one of the very few men whom the King would address by a nickname—there was fabricated the title of Lord High Steward, with duties to be no less admirably carried out because not too closely defined. Lord Crewe was more than welcome, not only as Secretary of State for India, but because of his abundant merit as a fellow-traveller. Lord and Lady Shaftesbury, in attendance on the Queen, served as a reminder that religious tolerance had entirely established itself; Queen Victoria could not suffer Lord Beauchamp as a Lord-in-Waiting because of his (very moderate, forsooth) High Church tendencies; Lord Halifax had to resign a minor post as Groom-in-Waiting to the Heir to the Crown before he could preside over the English Church Union, but succession to that office did nothing now to prevent Lord Shaftesbury from carrying the wand of Lord Chamberlain to a Queen-Consort. As Aide-de-Camp, General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien represented—and who could represent better—the British Army; a quick temper was the only fault (and with him a fault so much more becoming than many so-called merits) of a soldier towards whom King George had a decided leaning, who was to crown the fame he had already won with an act of unforgettable gallantry

<sup>1</sup> Eldest brother of the Queen; created Marquis of Cambridge, 1917. [1868-1922.]

<sup>2</sup> 2nd Earl of Durham.



in forbidding a fierce German attempt to over-run and overwhelm a British force. Excellent was the notion, which was said to emanate from the Queen, that Mr. Fortescue,<sup>1</sup> the Librarian at Windsor Castle, should serve as chronicler of the voyage: John Fortescue's fluent pen, faultless style, "dead certainty" as to facts, and power of graphic description were to be employed to highest advantage in compiling a sumptuous little volume bearing the simple title of *The Royal Visit to India*. The King had been able to gather from the army and navy thirteen of the gentlemen who were to attend him; of these, eight had already seen active service, and one<sup>2</sup> was to lay down his life but three years later on the field of battle. The point is to be emphasised: despite post-War remarks made with some asperity, if with little accuracy, the King has always been more than disposed to have in his entourage men who have played honourable, if not distinguished, parts in war. So to the Durbar there went in the train of the Sovereign representatives of the Lifeguard Cavalry of the Line, Indian Cavalry, Artillery, Foot Guards and Infantry of the Line—a goodly band, who could say with truth that there had been few campaigns in the past thirty years in which one or other of them had not taken a share.

When King Edward, as Prince of Wales, made his progress through India, Lord Napier of Magdala proposed he should have a bodyguard of twenty picked Life Guardsmen, who would be always about his person and would prevent any unauthorised person having access to him. The

<sup>1</sup>The Honourable John Fortescue, later Sir John Fortescue, K.C.V.O.

<sup>2</sup>Lord Charles Fitzmaurice, son of the Marquis of Lansdowne.

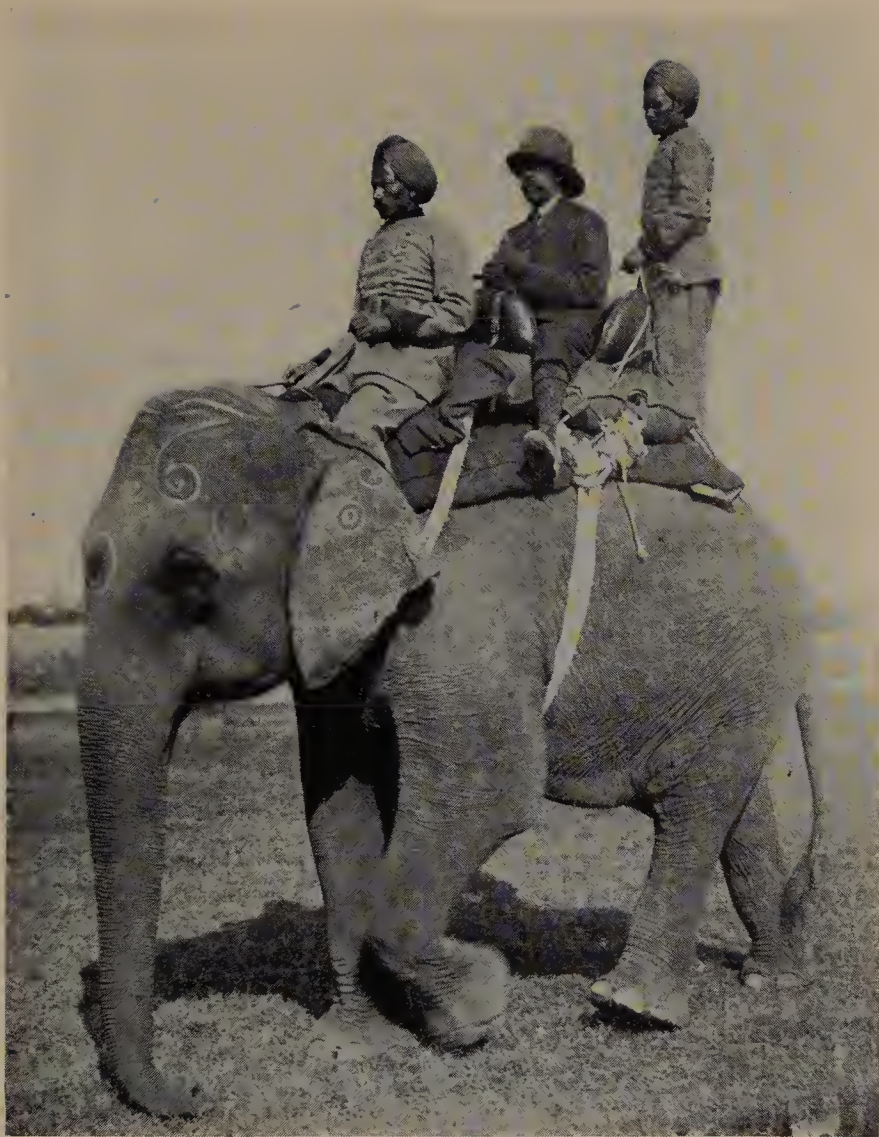


proposal was not adopted in 1876, but was renewed in 1911, with the result that in the King's suite there figured three senior non-commissioned officers of the Household Cavalry, whose full dress was at least the equal of the gorgeous native uniforms lavishly displayed.

The vessel, with their Majesties and suite on board, set sail from Portsmouth on November 11, 1911, the guns of the *Victory* paying solemn tribute to the departure of an Admiral King and his Queen. At Spithead the escort formed, consisting of *Cochrane*, *Defence*, *Argyll* and *Natal*, the whole under the command of Rear-Admiral Sir Colin Keppel, whose flag the *Medina* flew when the King himself was not aboard. At length, to the proud thunder of the guns of the Home Fleet, the King sailed out on to the high seas.

From the Home Fleet at Spithead to the Atlantic Fleet at Gibraltar the weather was very unkind, and to no one more so than to Queen Mary, for whom, to be near the sea has always been a delight; to be on the sea, unless it be lake-like, little less than a misery. "I am not used to roughing it", she may have plaintively said, when the Colonial tour was proposed to her and the delights of the *Ophir* depicted. "Roughing it" to her would mean not the discomforts attendant on a land journey, to which she was well seasoned, but the buffeting of the waves in a stormy passage. The more honour to a Queen that, whether India, Australia or Ireland be the objective, she never for an instant hesitated over what was sure to be an ordeal if it were equally sure to be a beneficent duty.

On this occasion the chief cabins had been placed too far



*The Emperor of India on a native mount.*



forward and had to be changed in mid-storm; the wind and waves united for two days in fury, and, owing to the time lost in breasting the billows of the Bay, the stay at the Rock, to the intense disappointment of the garrison and general population, had to be curtailed.

From Gibraltar on the way out to Gibraltar on the way back, the sun shone with varying intensity but with something like uniform brilliance, and no complaint or comment, except on the score of excessive heat at Bombay, could be lodged by any of the travellers against the weather.

At Port Said on the morning of the 21st the Khedive boarded the *Medina*, the King paying a return visit on the deck of the Khedive's sumptuous yacht, King and Khedive then going through the inevitable function of inspecting the guards of honour, of which one was drawn from the 7th Egyptian Battalion in their smart blue-grey uniform with red tarboosh and white Zouave gaiters, and the other from the battalion of Scots Guards then stationed at Cairo. The Agent-General<sup>1</sup>—with Sir John Maxwell, who was in command of the British troops—had dined on board the night before, and could report to the King that Egypt was faithfully observing the neutrality prescribed for her in the Italo-Turkish war then afoot; that no strong Nationalist party was agitating; that the Ministers were astute enough to see on which side Egyptian bread was buttered, and that the Khedive, though no doubt gleefully anticipating golden opportunities for intrigue, was for the time being on his best behaviour.

The Khedive had taken every precaution for the safe and

<sup>1</sup> Lord Kitchener had taken up his duties in September.

honourable passage of his illustrious guests through the Canal. At every kilometre-post stood a sentry, and patrols from the Camel Corps followed the ship on both banks. Thus, even the wastes that fringed the Canal were peopled by bands of Bedouin horsemen and irregulars paying fervent homage to their white overlord. Now for the first time were to be seen east of Suez the three flags of the Royal yacht—the Admiralty Flag, the Royal Standard, and the Union Jack, which the King would unfurl as an Admiral of the Fleet. Aden, that abomination of desolation, can, anyhow, claim to be the first outpost of India, and at Aden was given for the first time, by the men-of-war in harbour, the 101 guns salute reserved for the Emperor of India. Nor was it allowed to escape the King's notice that the first land salute was given by the 51st Company of the Royal Garrison Artillery, which had fired salutes for him, once before his Accession, at Colombo in 1901, and once again at Madras in 1906. Even dreary Aden was festive, with houses, shipping, and foreshore festooned in colour, and when the King and Queen landed to visit the statue of Queen Victoria, it is for once no figure of speech to say that the entire and very mixed population was abroad to see them. The escort, mostly bearded Sikhs, was furnished by the Aden squadron of native cavalry, and if it were a little strange to see the advance guard and main body consisting of horsemen and the rearguard of camelry, competent observers freely admitted that the Household Cavalry at home could have offered nothing better either in precision of movement or perfection of "turn-out".

Aden was but the modest curtain-raiser for the great



spectacles to come. Before 10 o'clock on the morning of December 2, the *Medina* anchored within two miles of the palm trees and flat shore of Bombay, and the Viceroy and Governor <sup>1</sup> immediately put off to tender their expressions of homage and loyal welcome. More than one happy rencontre was to occur, for among the King's suite there were no fewer than three gentlemen who had been schoolfellows of Lord Hardinge at Harrow, two of whom had also been his fellow undergraduates at Trinity College, Cambridge. And the Viceroy's Military Secretary was the brilliant "Frank" Maxwell who had earned his Victoria Cross in South Africa and would fall fighting finely in the Battle of the Somme, while his brother-officer in the 18th (King George's Own) Bengal Lancers was Clive Wigram, whom Lord Kitchener had selected to attend the then Prince of Wales in 1905 and who was now one of the King's equerries.<sup>2</sup>

The Royal landing took place in the afternoon, again to the thunder of an Imperial salute; and under blazing sunshine the President of the Bombay Municipal Corporation in a short address proudly vindicated the right of Bombay—dowry of Catherine of Braganza—to the honour of first welcoming their Majesties to the loyal lands of India. To this the King seems to have replied, not only with well selected phrase, but with a vigour and clarity of diction which surprised even some of his entourage and provoked his audience to tumultuous cheers.

The Oriental is lavish in expenditure alike of colour and

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Clarke, afterwards Lord Sydenham.

<sup>2</sup> Another brother-officer was Oswald Fitzgerald, who was to perish with his Chief in the ill-fated *Hampshire*.



cash, but—to use a vulgarism—he expects value for his money in the matter of pomp and circumstance. Thus the whole tour was marked by greater state than would, even if it could, be maintained in a similar progress through England. At Bombay and thereafter the usual Sovereign's escort was replaced by at least three regiments of Cavalry and a battery of Royal Horse Artillery; guards of honour were everywhere; regiment vied with regiment, battalion strove against battalion in friendly rivalry to add dignity and glamour to each successive scene. Even when, at Agra, in the absence of the King in Nepal, the Queen proposed to go to church quietly, she must gracefully yield to the earnest request of the 13th Hussars—the famous Lily-Whites—to be accorded the honour of providing an escort. Here at Bombay the short progress through the streets and back to the harbour was picked out by the braided blue of Hussars, the plastroned jackets of Lancers, and the Royal scarlet of Dragoons; dark turbaned horsemen were also to perform their devoir to their liege lord, probably for the only time in their service, and regiments of foot were to dip their colours to the Indian dust as their bands crashed into the Anthem. For many thousands of private soldiers, upholding in their humble way the fabric of Empire, it was the culminating point in a career of Royal service, and the King-Emperor's salute as he passed was to be treasured as an unforgettable gesture.

Temperamentally as well as climatically, India lends herself more easily to display than the greyer homeland; organised decoration and illumination was ample, and if to the critical eye of the artist design was not always flawless,

in the blending of tones the native of the East hardly errs even in the most elaborate ornamental schemes; the robes of the people themselves formed a gay corridor wherever the King and Queen passed, and from upper windows and balconies of every house hung carpets and shawls draped in folds which only children of the East can fashion.

From Bombay there must be a stiff journey of 900 miles until, on the morning of the 7th of December, there was reached the Selimgarh station, upon a detached bastion of the great Fort of Delhi, where the Viceroy with Lady Hardinge, leading officials of India, and a group of Indian Princes were assembled to receive the King and Queen. Now for the first time the King was to be attended by a Ruling Chief-in-Waiting, the Maharaja of Udaipur, in whose veins flowed the bluest blood in India and who was wrapped in a flowing gown of white satin edged with gold; conspicuous—and rightly conspicuous—in the retinue was Sir Pertab Singh, already described as a veteran, but four years later to make history by leading troops in his Emperor's service on the battlefields of Europe.

On thrones erected in a great courtyard, their Majesties received the greetings of the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Gaekwar of Baroda, the Maharajas of Mysore and Kashmir, and the rest of the Ruling Chiefs in succession according to territorial arrangement. Three processions were then formed: first, that of the British officials in carriages, with their escorts and bodyguards; then that of the King-Emperor; and the third composed of the Ruling Indian Chiefs. Now appeared an instance of faulty "stage-management", to which the King has more than once or twice been sub-

jected; the occasion was one of those on which the merits of the ceremonial were the King's, and the mistake that of his producer. Imagination plays a large part in the character of the native Indian, and to the native eye appearance accounts for very much. People remembered how murmurs of "Shabash" would greet Lord Kitchener when he appeared with his troops and as he led them past the saluting-point on the occasion of a great Review, native spectators were heard to murmur: "He should be a king." Here was the King-Emperor himself, the Great White Sovereign at whose smile millions would rejoice, who with a frown could cause millions to tremble. It meant nothing to the throngs that it was in sheer desire to be near to his Indian subjects the King declined the exalted aloofness of a howdah. What the people saw, or, rather, what many of them failed to see, was the King astride a horse with no standard borne before him, in uniform which to the inexperienced eye was precisely that on the back of a British General, and wearing a pith helmet which from so low an elevation did much to overshadow the features on which folk were longing to gaze. So unobserved was the progress of the King that, seeing the Queen alone in a carriage, regal in bearing and marked out by the gorgeous fan and umbrella, the multitudes murmured that the King was not in the procession at all!

The Imperial camp, which covered a space of 25 square miles, was reached at high noon, and the first witness to the herculean task of constructing it was to be found in the trim grass lawns, at which those marvelled who realised that a short year before the spot had been brown desert land. The days and evenings preceding the Durbar were

crowded with event; receptions of Ruling Chiefs, visits and reviews on a minor scale, an unofficial visit to a polo match, and a torchlight tattoo on the polo ground—for the ineffectiveness of which, circumstance was perhaps responsible. But the producer was again at fault with respect to the State banquet given by the King and Queen to over a hundred guests on the evening of the 8th. Not only did the banqueting tent, being very long, very narrow and low, present a very unregal appearance, but it constituted an offence against the elements of sanitary science in the matter of ventilation.

The Durbar was held on the 12th, in the large amphitheatre three miles from the Royal camp; ten thousand spectators, including all the great officials, filled the semi-circular stand, which in structure was perhaps too suggestive of the Ascot Grand Stand, opposite which was a gorgeous shamiana. At the centre point of the semicircle, a hundred yards from the shamiana, was raised the Royal dais, to which the King and Queen came for the reading, in English and Urdu, of the Proclamation reciting the King's Coronation at Westminster. The arena was occupied by 20,000 troops of all arms, and outside the amphitheatre a mound had been built up to accommodate 50,000 natives.

At high noon on the 12th of December came the supreme moment of triumph, beside which the glories of ancient Rome may be thought to pale into parochial insignificance. Crowned and royally robed, enthroned like central jewels set in a medallion glowing with the uniforms of two armies and a hundred corps, the Imperial pair received the homage of India. The picture of the Durbar, with all its magnifi-

cence, all its streaming glory of colour, all its wealth of incident, has been painted indelibly and for all time in the pages of *The Royal Visit to India*: if the organisation of an occasion which may have place of honour in the history of the British Empire left something to be desired, the triumph of the two dominant figures was unqualified and complete. When procession after procession had passed, when thunder after thunder of artillery had roared its salute, when the last salute had been sounded and the Viceroy by the King-Emperor's order had read a Proclamation of boons to be conferred in honour of the day, the Chief Herald stood up to his full height in his stirrups, and, doffing his helmet, called for three cheers for the King-Emperor and three more for the Queen-Empress. A final fanfare from the trumpeters, and then in clear voice and with measured emphasis the King read from a slip of paper news which buzzed from centre to flank of the great arena, and in an hour or two was to stir many a breast and inspire many a heart-burning in London. The capital of India was to be transferred from Calcutta to Delhi; a Governorship was to be created for the Presidency of Bengal; a new Lieutenant-Governorship for Behar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa, and a Commissionership, as before, for Assam, with a general redistribution of boundaries. In other, and unmistakable words Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal, which had caused so much irritation, was revised, and a quite different partition projected.

The secret had been well kept—too well kept, it was murmured in some quarters when the news was flashed home. Lord Curzon voiced with some passion his displeasure; the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi traversed many



of his well-considered theories and stultified a good deal of what he had been able and forward to do in India. But what irritated him especially was that the change should be made without the knowledge—and, of course, without the advice—of himself or any other Viceroy. To be supreme in India in 1905 and to be not worth consulting on an Indian matter of vital importance in 1911 was certainly a heavy drop, but perhaps a wholesome reminder that pro-consuls, however potent, are only representatives. And for many it may have been a further wholesome reminder that the King, whose nautical training had taught him to keep things with scrupulous tidiness in their proper places, had the happy knack, if required, of keeping people in their places also.

Less noticed but scarcely less significant was the great religious ceremony which took place on the following day, when Hindus, Jains, Mahomedans, Sikhs, great bands of irregulars, companies of the King's own men, myriads of civilians clustered under their religious leaders to yield hearty thanks to the Omnipotent that the prophecy of old had been fulfilled, and that India, through the race of Kings from over the wide sea, was to gain peace at last—a peace which had been denied her through countless centuries, while army after army had trampled her harvests back into the fields from which they had sprung, and had laid waste her fairest cities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Every Sikh soldier had already visited the shrine of Guru Teg Bahadur who, dying under torture in 1675, had flung at Aurungzeb this prophecy: "I behold coming from across the ocean a race of men who will spread peace and justice and root out tyranny and oppression." Before this shrine the Sikhs now murmured: "By Thy Mercy, O God, his words have proved true; for the British Government, which confers happiness on its subjects, has been established in India. We Sikhs of the Gurus in the midst of our happiness and rejoicing to-day



A great national festival filled that afternoon with all the displays and shows in which the Indian revels. It was the people's day, with musical rides, daring displays of horsemanship, groups of jugglers and other variety entertainments. The plain between the Jumna and the old fortress palace of Shah Jehan was densely packed with happy humanity, easily controlled by the good-tempered police of the Punjab, whose blue and red turbans set off their well-fitting khaki uniforms.

High above, on the old Shah's balcony, the King and Queen identified themselves with their people's sport. A curious mistake often lodges with would-be benevolent persons who think that the highly-placed, when visiting their more lowly friends, should observe the utmost "simplicity" of dress and demeanour. The King and Queen knew then, as always, that precisely the converse is what is appreciated and it was in Imperial purple and ermine, with crowns upon their heads, that they made holiday with their Indian subjects. Unannounced by the trumpets, it took a few moments for the reality of their appearance to dawn upon the crowd. Then, after a minute's silence which could be felt, there was a great upward surge of dark arms in salute and a great shout of acclaim rent the air. From the balcony their Majesties passed to two thrones on the ramparts in order to come more entirely within view, and for hours the people

especially render Thee our humble thanks that our beloved Emperor has come to the City where our holy Guru, the Bestower of Salvation, uttered this fateful prophecy, in order to place the crown of many realms upon his head. O Eternal God, may this peaceful and just Sovereignty ever endure, and may the Emperor George, and his gracious Consort, Queen Mary, abide in happiness, and may the Empire extend and prosper".

filed past them, unrestrained by police or military, until with the sunset King George and his Queen returned to camp.

The 14th of December—for forty years a gloomy anniversary at Queen Victoria's Court—was fixed for the great Review of the troops who had done duty at the Durbar. To the number of 40,000 they paraded, British and Indian, horse, foot and guns, to sweep through the complicated movements of a pre-war review, and this faultlessly—till the horsemen galloped past. Here the excitement of the moment proved too much, and line after line of frenzied cavalry swept by, each regiment trying to set up its own record for speed. If a fault, it was a wholly excusable—because wholly human—fault. There is a pleasing legend extant as to how a famous regiment of Irish cavalry—since amalgamated—distinguished itself. Dashing down the vast space that originally had been allotted, it first swept aside its own mounted band and then broke wildly into the rear of the native regiment in front of it—to the dire confusion, but little damage, of a very gallant corps. It was all for the honour and glory of the King, and why should the boys of Ireland hang back?

At one moment the cynosure of every eye was the little Maharaja of Bahawal: a tiny figure on a great war camel, he led his own regiment of bearded warriors past the King-Emperor, his baby arm clutching a toy sword outstretched in a perfect salute.

That evening in a tent, vast in dimensions but decorated with little dignity, the King-Emperor held an Investiture the first candidate for which was the Queen-Empress who, dressed in pale blue, the colour which for so many years

she has specially affected, knelt before the King to receive the Star of India. The other ladies and gentlemen were passing in seemingly unending file, when a strong smell of burning was noticeable, cry was raised of "Fire!" and two or three hundred people rose to their feet.

Both King and Queen were then to show clear proof of their pedigree. It is difficult to fix the exact point when disregard of danger gives way to physical courage in presence of danger itself, but to whichever of these qualities their demeanour was due, it is enough to remember that the Queen, who dislikes the notion of fire even more than that of steaming over a rough sea, sat motionless and apparently unconcerned, while the King continued to pin stars on breasts and be-ribbon shoulders as if functioning within his own Palace walls. Nor had the danger been unreal: the tent allotted to Lord Crewe's private secretary, 100 yards away, had caught fire, and but for the fire pickets promptly cutting down the intervening tents to prevent the conflagration spreading the folly of packing three or four thousand people into a marquee in the middle of a huge camp might well have cost a fearful price in precious lives.

Little now remained but for the King and Queen to lay, with simple ceremony, the twin foundation-stones of the new capital city of Delhi and to bid goodbye to the old town. It was a solemn farewell and not untinged with sadness as the great Chiefs once more bowed low before the departing Sovereign; but even taken by itself it served to establish the wisdom, no less than the glory, of the Royal tour.

Within three years the King-Emperor was to call his people to arms: Englishmen swarmed to their camps, and the

great Dominions mustered their hundreds of thousands, but our enemies had dared to hope that India might be languid, or ineffective, in response. India was to fling the half-muttered lie in the teeth of England's enemies. The Indian Army leapt to arms to win undying honour, to lay down lives in thousands, and to have a great Memorial on the battlefields where Indian soldiers fell. Tour or no tour, India in the hour of England's need would have been her own splendid self, but she had been given a visible something to fight for: there was to be burnt into her memory a virile figure courteously receiving acts of spontaneous homage, speaking glowing words, and coming into close touch with the wearers of his own uniform.

After Delhi, while the Queen journeyed to Agra to revel in a rich feast of sight-seeing, the King repaired to Nepal to enjoy ten days' big-game shooting and to prove himself, as usual, not only a brilliantly successful but a persistently unselfish shot.

It was said that considerable erasures were made in Mr. Fortescue's manuscript before it reached the publisher's hands. If this be so, one could almost wish that the blue pencil had been applied to the suggestion locally submitted—of which the King was wholly unaware—that sixty bullocks should be tethered in the jungle on Christmas night in order to draw game to the rifles of the Royal party.

The King and Queen met at Bankipur on the evening of the 29th of December to reach Calcutta the following noon. Calcutta bade fair to rival in feast and frolic the successes of Bombay and Delhi, and the super-self-restrained Bengali rose to the occasion.

The chief attraction among many in another rather uncomfortably busy week was a magnificent pageant representing the past history of India, arranged not only with lavish expenditure but with excellent judgment by a Committee representing all classes of the unofficial community.

At the close of the entertainment the King and Queen drove slowly along the great ring, and within a couple of yards of it, so as to be in full and protracted view of a huge concourse grouped in a semicircle. It was a happy thought, and it was one of the King's own happy thoughts. The people, who on this occasion were really the people, manifested their joy and their reverence in their own admirable way. There was no attempt to throng or rush the carriage with its exalted occupants, although there was every opportunity of doing so. The Bengalis have ever been a patient people, and now they waited till the *cortège* had finally moved off, when, as one man, they tore across the open sward to the pavilion, pierced through the line of soldiers as it they had been a sheet of paper, and catching up the earth which had been trodden on by the King, pressed it in homage to their brows.

At noon on the 8th of January the King and Queen left Calcutta for Bombay under a final salute of 101 guns from the ramparts of Fort William, and left behind the three Princes and the personal Staff. Tears streamed down the face of the Maharaja of Scindia, and Sir Pertab Singh, toughened warrior though he was, could only stammer that he was growing an old man, for he too broke down under stress of emotion. On the 10th the shores of India faded



in the *Medina's* wake as the King left the Empire which had spread itself at his feet.

At Port Sudan on the 17th was Lord Kitchener, ready to take the King and Queen to Sinkat, a place to be remembered in sinister association with the ineffable Osman Digna. From a tent the King and Queen witnessed the troops file past—cavalry, camel corps, artillery and infantry—to the music of Sudanese military bands which played native march tunes to a magnificent swagger of drummers. There followed a war dance of Dinkas, the wild jet-blacks from the south of Fashoda who danced excellently well and were clothed exceedingly little; a sham-fight of other tribesmen brought to a close a scene specially remarkable for those who realised that but a few years before many of the tribes had fought desperately against the forces of the British Crown, that some had travelled hundreds of miles to see the King, and that the greater part had never seen nor heard of each other before.

Then at Malta on the 24th the King and Queen from the Governor's Palace were to witness a defile of the troops of the garrison; for this there had been landed, for the first time since the island has been in British hands, an armed force of French blue-jackets, who moved with the light jaunty step for which the *poilu* is famous. A British naval brigade of over 2500 men had also been disembarked and went past with a swing which left the soldiers far behind; then came the old 14th—West Yorks—to the music of *ça ira*, which they have played ever since their Colonel, at Famars in 1793, bade them beat the French Republicans "to their own d——d tune". Three other regiments followed, and the



march past was perfect at every point except that, to the unmilitary mind, a march by column of fours is a sadly tedious process.

The visit to Gibraltar was again shorn of ceremony,—this time because the news had been received that the Duke of Fife had died on board his dhahabœa at Khartoum. To the King and Queen the Duke had been a friend of their childhood as well as a relative by marriage, and his death cast something of a shadow alike over their home-coming and over the Thanksgiving Service for which every corner of St. Paul's Cathedral was thronged.

## CHAPTER XXII

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THE first act of the King on his return from India was to remember Sir Edward Grey's services at a critical time at the Foreign Office, and to reward them with the Order of the Garter. Almost every journal glibly stated that this honour had previously only been conferred on four persons who were neither Royal Princes nor peers: Sir Robert Walpole, Lord North, Lord Castlereagh, and Lord Palmerston were correctly quoted, but it was overlooked by most people, except the King himself, that Charles II. immediately on landing vested General Monk with the great Order of Chivalry sometime before that soldier was raised to the Dukedom of Albemarle. The Royal Speech (read by the Sovereign) was largely, but quite colourlessly, devoted to foreign politics, and no allusion of course was made to the trip which Lord Haldane had taken a week earlier to Germany. The initiative for that Mission came from Germany, and was probably inspired by a wish to loosen, if not dissolve, the *entente* between England, France and Russia. The Mission itself proved a failure, although the Foreign Minister optimistically told the Manchester Reform Club that something had been done to dispel suspicion. He could have found it scarcely necessary to remind the King that Great

Britain would not pay the price demanded for German friendship, which was to abandon friends elsewhere.

There was signed an alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria on March 30th, 1912. The bare news of this was telegraphed to Paris, and, strive how he might, M. Poincaré could get no details until he saw the full text when in Russia four months later. He immediately protested—and Sazonoff admitted the protest as justified—that the treaty was aggressive rather than defensive, and that the Balkan States—to whom Greece had now joined hands—must be restrained from an attack on Turkey. But by now the mischief was done: enthusiastic Pan-Slavs, like the Russian Minister in Belgrade and the Russian Chargé-d’Affaires in Sofia, were whispering words of encouragement into the ears of the Balkan Princes; three short months later, while European statesmen were still discussing how to restrain Balkan ambitions, Balkan armies were approaching the gates of Constantinople.

An armistice was signed at Chataldja on the 3rd December by the representatives of all the belligerents except Greece, and a fortnight later the King was more than ready to grant the use of St. James’s Palace for a gathering of Ambassadors—over which Sir Edward Grey presided—to represent the views of the Powers, while there sat concurrently a Conference of Delegates to discuss conditions of peace. The Foreign Minister must have reported to his Sovereign that he had, if a very honourable, a rather weary task. The Ambassadors day after day argued over villages of which most of them had never even previously heard; they discoursed of peoples as strange to them as if they had been denizens of the planet Mars, and in all honesty set their

manicured fingers to unravel that Gordian knot which even the Peace of Bucharest was unable to disentangle, and was only to be cut by the sword.

Twice in the April of 1912 the King was to stretch out a friendly hand to France and perhaps to show himself as one of many who believe that country to be set for the enlightenment, rather than the amusement, of the world. Early in March the Marquis de Breteuil, one of King Edward's intimate friends, was asked to come to London, and at Buckingham Palace the King spoke something thus: "I have always been conscious of my imperfect knowledge of France, and of my inability to speak French with real ease and without accent. Perhaps this was because, as a child, there seemed little chance of my coming to the Throne. I am very anxious that it should be otherwise with my eldest son. Will you let him come and stay with you for four or five months, so that he may really learn to speak your language and to know something of your country at first hand?" The proposal was, needless to say, eagerly accepted, and the visit arranged for an early date.

"Two points were looked to in the Prince of Wales's education," says Horace Walpole. "The first was that he should not be trusted to anything but a ductile cypher, the other that he should be brought up with due affection for Royal power; in other words, he was to be the slave of his father and the tyrant of his people." The precise converse was the King's method at this important moment: he sent his son to learn something at first-hand of the régime of a great Republic, and he entrusted him to the care of a man who knew

thoroughly the world he lived in and who had very pronounced opinions of his own.

The stay of the Prince in Paris was, of course, to have no official significance; but he exchanged visits with the President and Prime Minister; he received, with many blushes, the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour; he exhibited to the experts with whom he was put in touch an eagerness to learn, an interest in practical problems and a rare knowledge of industrial possibilities and difficulties, and when the Earl of Chester went home in July, the King would have been gratified to know that the Marquis de Breteuil wrote to M. Poincaré: "The young Prince carries away a strong impression of all that he has seen, and a real sympathy for France and Frenchmen; he is quite determined to come here again as soon, and as often, as possible. Thus we seem to have attained the desired result, and you have greatly helped towards this."

While the Prince of Wales was making himself well liked in their capital, there was to be offered an act of homage on the part of the French to the memory of King Edward and Queen Victoria. In superb weather, with the sea as blue as the sky, M. Poincaré, as Prime Minister, on the 13th and 14th April unveiled the statues of Queen Victoria at Nice and of King Edward at Cannes. The occasion enabled M. Poincaré to deliver orations which ran along the highest level of his famous prose, and the British Ambassador, in simple phrases, said that it gave his King the greatest pleasure that the French and English sailors should have appeared together, both at the Review and the subsequent ceremonies; His Majesty believed that this joint parade was

a new proof of the very real and very beneficial friendship which existed between France and England.

"In labouring for the good of his people, he laboured equally for the peace and civilisation of the world and for the cause of humanity, and when with his last breath he sighed that he had only endeavoured to do his duty, he was unduly self-effacing, for in truth he had succeeded to the full in what he had sought to accomplish."

This was the paragraph about King Edward in M. Poincaré's speech which was known to have touched King George most closely: he asked that the whole speech in the original French might be sent to him, and he desired Colonel Wigram to send a letter of congratulation to Sir Francis Bertie on the success of his own Mission to the Riviera, with a special word of thanks for the French Minister.<sup>1</sup> The vital forces of international agreements are not to

<sup>1</sup>"... The reports of the proceedings have been followed with the closest attention by His Majesty, who is very much pleased that everything has passed off without a hitch.

"The King asks that you will take the earliest opportunity of assuring M. Poincaré how deeply touched His Majesty is by the beautiful and moving words used by him at Nice and Cannes in his allusions and references to the Reigns of His Majesty's dear grandmother and father.

"The King feels that the presence of M. Poincaré and his two distinguished colleagues invested those ceremonies with a special dignity and significance, and that the sympathetic spirit shown by the French people throughout the stirring events of the last few days cannot fail to consolidate the foundations of friendship which so happily exist between the two countries.

"The King wishes to thank M. Poincaré for the great compliment paid to the English Fleet in inviting a Detachment to take part in these celebrations alongside the French Navy and Army, and for the cordial welcome extended to his Sailors.

"I am further to add that His Majesty has heard with much gratification from his son of his interview with M. Poincaré and is especially grateful to the Prime Minister for giving the Prince of Wales such facilities for seeing the places of interest in Paris and for taking such an interest in his education. . . ."



be found in fêtes or compliments; but fêtes and compliments, if only as a sign of which way national winds are blowing, are not without value in their influence upon popular opinion and temper.

In this April also the possibility of foreign complications from which the attention of the public had been diverted by domestic issues and the sinking of the *Titanic* was again forced on notice by the closing of the Dardanelles and the detention in the Black Sea of nearly 250 vessels. Anxiety was only dispelled when Lord Morley, in the House of Lords on the 2nd of May, could not only announce the re-opening of the Narrows, but could emphasise the ties binding Great Britain to Turkey and Italy alike.

The King's thirst for acquiring information as to even temporary European difficulties, such as this, was no less keen than that of his father, but their methods were different. For many years King Edward relied largely, if not exclusively, on what he heard and learnt from Sir Charles Hardinge, than whom there could be no more reliable source of knowledge. When abroad Sir Charles would generally be in attendance, while at home he would be in constant touch and in confidential communication with the Sovereign, who could often anticipate—and was always sure to grasp very quickly—what was to be told him. King George would rely rather on the offices of his own incomparable Private Secretary, Lord Stamfordham, or of the no less admirable Sir Frederick Ponsonby, as his liaison with the Foreign Office, in which Department there lodged just then no one who enjoyed anything like special access to him.

As to the state of the first British line of defence the King could, however, satisfy himself by his inspection—his third—of his great Fleet, assembled at Weymouth. Fog interfered with the programme on May 7, but he was able to visit four specimen ships, and with his second son to travel two miles in a submerged submarine. On the two following days, firing and battle practice could be carried out, and the King was shown how submarines could be detected and bombs dropped by aeroplanes. Altogether three very happy days were spent; and the Sovereign, who in naval matters could rely pretty well on his own judgment, had little criticism to pass as to the efficiency of the Fleet and its aeronautic branch.

From Weymouth the King travelled to Aldershot, where, as usual, if his knowledge was less expert, he was eager to witness various, but always practical, military manœuvres and exhibitions of airmanship, and where his little speeches, when presenting new colours to some of the battalions, found special favour.

If in this spring the King were to derive no satisfaction in the appointment at this time of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein <sup>1</sup> to replace Count Metternich at the German Embassy, he was this autumn to make the acquaintance of two men playing, and to play, important parts in European

<sup>1</sup> Baron Marschall von Bieberstein at Constantinople had outwitted his colleagues and had largely succeeded in bringing the Turk under German influence; it was thought that he might attempt to resume the negotiations under which an Anglo-German arrangement might be arrived at concerning the Baghdad Railway and other questions, and that the naval rivalry which was straining both countries could die down. But Baron Marschall died in September to be succeeded by the altogether admirable, if unhappy, Prince Lichnowsky, whose relations with the King were of the very happiest.

history. One would not directly cross his path again; with the other he was to form ties of friendship which death alone would snap.

M. Sazonoff was due in London on diplomatic intent, and was invited to Balmoral on the 22nd September to spend a couple of days in the company of Sir Edward Grey.<sup>1</sup> There was then discussed, and partially drafted, an agreement which had a double object. Turkey must be made to see the necessity of genuine and thorough-going reforms, and all diplomatic measures must be used to localise, if not stifle, any Balkan War. The agreement did not prove of any substantial value, but the two days spent at Balmoral, where the Russian Minister was his best and least restless self, did not a little to consolidate under agreeable conditions amiable relations between the British and Russian Governments.<sup>2</sup>

A week earlier the King had met the man whom in the years to come he would regard, not only as his own friend, but as the friend of his country, the man who, but a few weeks before his death, could say: "I am conscious of having served England as well as if she had been my own country."

The September manœuvres, with the opposing armies led

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bonar Law was also summoned, but it was not known whether this was in order to enlighten him as to new developments in foreign policy or to ask him to explain why he was urging Ulster to resist.

<sup>2</sup> The King had just now been interested but in no wise fluttered by the announcement that the French Navy would henceforth be concentrated in the Mediterranean. The inference drawn was that in the event of a great war France would hold the Mediterranean against the fleets of Austria and Italy, Russia would look after the Baltic, while the Channel and the North Sea would be Great Britain's care.

by Sir Douglas Haig and Sir James Grierson, had been of special interest though the direct result proved indecisive, inasmuch as the day before that fixed for their termination the two forces came into such close contact that only fist-cuffs could have determined the issue. The coastline of East Anglia represented a frontier crossed between Wells and Hunstanton by the invading army, which was marching on London; its commander was endeavouring to force the defenders to attack, and to drive them on Ely. The King travelled from Scotland to watch the last two days' fighting and took up his quarters at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graced the mess of Sir John French, who was acting as Umpire-in-Chief. Not only did the King watch very closely three days' work, but at the conference held in the College Hall, he spoke simple and very sound words.

The most superficial observer could have no doubt that the soldiers were taking their profession very seriously, but what had met with the King's greatest admiration was the new aerial work of startling worth, the rapid concentration of troops by rail without interference with civilian traffic, and the use of mechanical transport. The remarks may or may not have been carefully prepared, but they anyhow showed an appreciation of military difficulties and military possibilities which made very agreeable hearing for the audience.

The French representative at manœuvres was General Foch, of whom much had been heard but little seen, but who now, even as a spectator of mimic fighting, must give evidence to the expert of what military stuff he was made. The General could gratify the King at once by telling him

that one of the chief points which had struck him was the keenness of the officers. "*Je cherche partout un lourdaud, je n'en trouve pas un.*" Foch had followed every move of the troops with eager eye, but he had also had time to make enquiries of his Roumanian colleague as to the Balkan situation. "Nothing will happen", the King learnt had been the Roumanian's comfortable reply. "We are keeping an eye on the Bulgarians, and they know that if they budge we are ready to fall upon them."

The allure, the frankness, the quick wit, the readiness to please and be pleased, all these, scarcely less than the obvious military merits of a brilliant soldier, appealed at once to the King, who knew, moreover, that political winds had whistled in his teeth only because he was a loyal son of Holy Church. From the hour when they first struck hands in the College Hall till the moment when the last breath fluttered from the old Marshal's lips, King George held in supreme regard the man who was to be described by his own countrymen as "*le dieu de la guerre*". The day was to come when Foch, wearing the uniform of a Marshal of France, but carrying the bâton of a British Field-Marshal, would ride as an honoured guest immediately behind the Sovereign at the Sovereign's birthday parade.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### VISIT TO BERLIN

**L**ANGUID though the King's interest may have been in his German relations he could not be other than keenly interested in the engagement which reached his ears early in 1913 between the only surviving son of his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, and the only daughter of the Kaiser. Young as he had been at the time he knew that his father had been a frank sympathiser with the victim of Bismarck's ruthless policy, and had brought down upon himself angry German comments by walking in the funeral procession of the ex-King of Hanover in Paris in 1898. Prussia had then affected to suspect some ulterior meaning in the Prince's open exhibition of friendship for his Hanoverian kinsfolk, and the all-unworthy suspicion was not allayed by the evident interest which the Prince showed in the betrothal of the Princess Thyra, the youngest sister of the Princess of Wales, to the Duke of Cumberland. Prussian heart-burnings were intensified when the Duke, with the Prince's approval, renewed the paternal protest against the seizure of his family's fortune, as also when at the end of the year a great concourse of the bridegroom's German adherents attended his wedding at Copenhagen. For long years to follow Berlin and Gmünden would hold no sort of friendly communica-



tion, although in 1892, in exchange for a written assurance from the Duke of Cumberland that he would engage in no undertaking against the peace of the German Empire, and would withdraw his protest against the seizure of his father's kingdom, the Kaiser, by rescript, restored to the Duke the disputed Welf Fond. The Queen Consort, of course, entirely shared the views which the King had inherited in this respect; her mother had been born at Hanover, and she herself had been trained to look upon the seizure of the Hanoverian throne and the confiscation of private property as a dark political crime. Now by means of the genuine affection which two young people had happily conceived for one another a term was to be set to the long-drawn-out feud between Hohenzollerns and Guelphs and, outwardly anyhow, peace and goodwill were to be restored.

To the wedding the King of England and the Tsar of Russia were bidden; to both Monarchs the peace of Europe was a main consideration, and if only for the sake of that peace, a cordial acceptance of the invitation was unhesitatingly sent.

The King and Queen, with a specially large suite, reached Berlin on the 21st of May, the Tsar and the Duke of Cumberland arriving one day later. The entry into Berlin of the British Sovereigns was marked by one of the military displays in which the Kaiser's soul delighted, but of which the German public was beginning to be just a little tired; the crowds on the road to the Castle were chiefly gathered to see the arrivals of distinguished persons. Only the ordinary police precautions were necessary for the advent of the King of England, but the whole length of the line over

which the Tsar of Russia travelled from the frontier was watched by the military; the roads and paths leading to the railway were closed, while a large staff of Russian secret police agents accompanied their Imperial Master. A State dinner and a wedding banquet, among other ceremonies, preceded the wedding itself, which took place on Saturday at the convenient, if uncanonical, hour of 5 P. M. The real wedding dinner was served in the *Rittersaal*; the Kaiser had scarcely swallowed his soup before he rose to deliver a lengthy and rather pompous toast and, the meal barely concluded, everyone joined in the ancient ritual of the *Fackeltanz* which proved a little bewildering to the visitors. The bride and bridegroom came into the centre and, while the band played a polonaise, proceeded round the room. The bride then danced with her father on one side and the Duke of Cumberland on the other, and the bridegroom with the Empress and the Duchess of Cumberland. The Tsar and King George then danced with the bride, and Queen Mary and the Crown Princess with the bridegroom, then in turn the bride and bridegroom danced with the whole company of Princes and Princesses. It was observed that the German Emperor broke the ceremonial by kissing the bride when she led him back to his place and with the solemn exercise ended, there came the distribution of pieces of the bride's garter, bearing the Arms of the bridal pair.

The King, of course, was not to be allowed to depart without witnessing a few military evolutions, and not only were some miniature manœuvres of his own regiment—the 1st Dragoons of the Guard—arranged for him, but the annual review of the troops of the Potsdam garrison was put

forward so that, on the historic parade-ground before the Stadt-Schloss, the Kaiser might lead the *Garde du Corps* past his Cousin of England. Busily as they were engaged at Berlin, the King and Queen found time to pay a visit to the Dowager Grand-Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the last surviving grandchild of George III. The Grand-Duchess was now in her 93rd year, and there was in store for her a bitter evening to a long life when only with difficulty could she communicate with her well-loved niece, the Queen of England, and when her only consolation, while the country of her adoption was drinking the blood of the country of her birth, was—so far as she was allowed—to carry comforts to the British prisoners.

The whole occasion of the wedding was admirably organised, and the presence of the bride's mother—where her room might have been preferred—did nothing to mar the smoothness of the proceedings or to conflict with the Kaiser's genuine desire to do honour and give pleasure to those he had gathered round him. Nor would he speed his parting guests without a substantial mark of goodwill. By Imperial order there came the release of three British subjects—Captains Trent and Brandon and Mr. Bertrand Stewart—who had been under sentence for espionage.<sup>1</sup> This was generally, and rightly, regarded as a most graceful act, and it was not unreasonably thought that as a finishing touch to a "happy family" gathering—where Kaiser, King, and Tsar had alike sought to make everyone happy—it might do much to smooth out Anglo-German relations.

<sup>1</sup> The German Emperor neglected one or two opportunities of obliging the King of Spain during the War in the matter of exchange of prisoners.

At Victoria Station, on the evening of the 29th, the King heard from Sir Edward Grey that the delegates from Turkey and the Balkans had been frankly told that their "time was up"; the hint had been taken even if its tone had been resented, and the Treaty of Peace was due to be signed at St. James's the next day.

The Treaty, however, was not to be worth much more than the paper it was written on. Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece fell out over the division of the spoils, their differences being accentuated by dissensions among the Great Powers, and while Bulgaria was busy with Serbs and Greeks, Roumania invaded her from the rear; the Turks, quick to see their opportunity, reassembled their disbanded army to seize Adrianople. The Peace of Bucharest was to deprive Bulgaria of all bargains; Adrianople was returned to Turkey, and even a so-called settlement could only check and not choke the ambitions and animosities of the Balkan peoples.

The King returned from Germany to complete arrangements, which he had carefully set afoot, for an event wholly pleasing to him. The President of the French Republic, M. Poincaré, was to arrive in London on the 23rd June, and was to be received with all the warmth of welcome which had marked the visits of President Loubet and President Fallières to King Edward. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, agreeably with the King's liking, rose to the occasion and published a noble stanza which, if difficult to translate, was taken to heart, and where possible learnt by heart, through the length and breadth of France.

Terrible with strength renewed from a tireless soil;  
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's mind  
First to face the Truth and last to leave old Truths behind—  
France beloved of every soul that loves or serves its kind.

The battleship in which the President crossed from Cherbourg was escorted into Portsmouth by British as well as French destroyers, and saluted by the British Fleet. At Portsmouth he was met by the Prince of Wales, and at Victoria Station by the King. It was the first time M. Poincaré had seen King George; he was sharply struck by the resemblance in features to his Cousin of Russia, although he noted that the King was less pale in complexion, less dreamy in outlook, with a less sad smile and a less timid demeanour.

The President was to be lodged now, like other illustrious visitors, in the apartments set aside for that purpose in St. James's Palace; after the War, when Madame Poincaré accompanied him to England, he was to be given the further distinction of being entertained at Buckingham Palace itself. Visits to the King and Queen, to the "ever beautiful Queen Alexandra" (as the French statesman described her) and other members of the Royal Family, preceded a reception at the French Embassy and a State dinner at Buckingham Palace. The King, in giving the toast<sup>1</sup> of the

<sup>1</sup> "Je suis on ne peut plus heureux, Monsieur le Président, de vous souhaiter le bienvenue dans ce pays et de vous dire combien je suis sensible à la courtoisie que vous me témoignez en me faisant visite si tôt après votre installation dans l'éminente et haute position que vous occupez.

"Les rapports que nos deux nations voisines ont entre elles depuis bien des siècles ont permis à chacune de profiter de la culture intellectuelle et de la prospérité matérielle de l'autre: un accroissement progressif de respect, de



evening, spoke—and spoke as if meaning every word which he said—of a continuous growth of mutual respect and goodwill between the two nations, and of the harmony which had marked their discussions on international questions since 1904. Neither in the King's speech nor in the President's sympathetic reply was there a syllable to excite chauvinism either in France or in England, and at least one of the guests murmured: "The Kaiser might well strive to adopt the same tone in pronouncing an oration."

Let us draw on a journal kept by M. Poincaré for the

bienveillance et d'accord mutuel en est le résultat. Depuis la signature en 1904, des actes diplomatiques qui ont si amicalement mis un terme à nos différends, les deux nations ont coopéré harmonieusement et cordialement aux affaires d'un intérêt international, et elles se sont senties attirées l'une vers l'autre par un même intérêt à un but identique. Nos Gouvernements ont constamment en vue le maintien de la paix et les deux côtés nous nous efforçons de parvenir à ce noble but.

"Ces derniers mois, lorsque de graves questions internationales se succédaient, l'esprit de confiance et de franchise mutuelle, avec lequel la France et la Grande-Bretagne ont abordé ces divers problèmes, a prouvé qu'il était d'avantage inestimable. Nous éprouvons une vive satisfaction à constater qu'en présence des difficultés sérieuses que l'Europe a traversée, tous les efforts des grandes Puissances intéressées n'ont pas cessé de tendre vers la paix.

"Je m'estime particulièrement heureux d'avoir pour hôte un homme d'Etat aussi distingué par ses services, et de réputation si haut que son nom n'est pas seulement éminent parmi ceux des hommes politiques, mais qu'il occupe une place dans cette illustre Académie, qui, depuis près de trois siècles, fait la gloire de la France et l'envie de l'Europe.

"Je désire aussi vous faire part, Monsieur le Président, de ma vive appréciation de vos sentiments de respect et d'estime à l'égard de mes illustres prédécesseurs: la Reine Victoria et mon Père bien-aimé. Deux fois dans le courant de l'année dernière, vous avez exprimé ces sentiments d'une manière aussi aimable qu'éloquente. Je vous assure, Monsieur le Président, qu'ils m'ont profondément ému et qu'ils resteront toujours gravés dans ma mémoire.

"Je lève mon verre pour vous souhaiter, Monsieur le Président, bonheur et prospérité; pour vous assurer des vœux sincères que je forme afin que la grande nation française jouisse d'un glorieux avenir et que les relations entre nos deux pays se continuent dans une étroite intimité et avec une vitalité inaltérable."

impressions of his reception in the City on the following day:

At the door of the Guildhall I am received by the Lord Mayor in his ermine-bordered red robes, and the Lady Mayoress. A procession is formed, and Pichon and Cambon, having donned diplomatic uniform, do nothing to dim the riot of colour which marks the whole ceremony. All the English people look like beautiful portraits which have slipped out of their old frames, Mr. Asquith himself being vested in a uniform with gold embroideries and gold epaulettes. Last year in Russia I felt as if I had been transported into a semi-Asiatic circle; now I feel as if I had been translated into a historic past, a past which France has done much to destroy for herself, but which we still recognise under the fitful lights of memory. I take my seat next to the Lord Mayor at a table on which is a beautifully wrought casket, an offering from the Goldsmiths' Company. Three loud taps with the gavel, and the Recorder, in black robes and white wig, reads the Address from the City of London, the text of which, on parchment, is then rolled up and placed within the casket. How could I resist saying in my acknowledgement that it was impossible not to feel something like deep emotion when entering so august and ancient a building, the shrine of such old and glorious customs.

The President, in his speech at the Guildhall—one of his finest oratorical efforts—reviewed the history of the Entente, declared that the friendship of the two nations was closer than ever, urged that no Power was shut out from co-operat-

ing with them, and insisted that the bond between England and France tended to maintain the European understanding.

Every arrangement had been made to please and interest the King's important guest, and the whole visit, which lasted three days, was a complete success, M. Poincaré, discarding altogether the coldness, never more than skin-deep, which his critics sometimes attribute to him, and leaving behind him an excellent impression of how a highly educated Frenchman can combine rigid uprightness with winning courtesy. Everywhere he went he made friends, and he was only a little nonplussed at the Court Ball when his ignorance of any "steps" prevented his partnering the Queen, and where his evening coat of rather bourgeois cut contrasted somewhat drably with the blaze of uniforms.

The King in July was to give his first Consent in Council under the Royal Marriage Act. The engagement of his cousin Prince Arthur of Connaught to his niece the Duchess of Fife was wholly to his liking; he could contemplate a marriage of affection which would at the same time unite two family fortunes and appreciably strengthen family ties. Yet another marriage was to engage his attention. The still youthful ex-King of Portugal had early confided to him that he was betrothed to Princess Augusta Victoria of the Roman Catholic branch of the Hohenzollern family. King Manoel, though then scarcely out of his teens, had been a State guest at Windsor, and here bonds of blood with the Royal Family were strengthened by sincere sympathy for a young man who had seen his father and brother butchered

before his eyes, and who had been obliged to fly his kingdom to avoid what might have been a like fate for himself.

Once a Sovereign always a Sovereign had been the rule observed by Queen Victoria and her eldest son, both of whom would stretch a point so as to give special honour to the Comte de Paris. At the wedding at Sigmaringen the King decided to be represented by his eldest son—the highest compliment he could pay—and when King Manoel brought his bride to share his home in England, he was to find that, although technically she had never been a Queen, his Consort was to be treated with the same deference as if a crown had rested on her brow.

In September the King and Queen were for two days the guests of Lord Spencer at Althorp in order to see something of the autumn military exercises. Their enjoyment was so thorough that they at once made arrangements for attending the movements the following year, when Sir Henry Rawlinson<sup>1</sup> was to have been attached to the King, and Colonel John Davidson<sup>2</sup> to the Queen, to act as guides and instructors. In these last pre-War manœuvres there was very little manœuvring, as they represented a sort of set plan to test the various formations with all their marching and carrying, as well as fighting, capabilities. All went fairly well according to plan, except that Sir John French, the Umpire-in-Chief, did not “get on” with Sir James Grierson,<sup>3</sup> who up

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Rawlinson, Commander-in-Chief in India.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Major-General Sir John Davidson, Director of Military Operations in France.

<sup>3</sup> General Grierson, appointed to command the 2nd Corps, died in the train near Amiens on his way to the front.

till then had been Chief of Staff elect in the eventuality of war. Grierson was a highly-trained Staff officer, a consummate linguist, and a favourite at many European Courts as well as with the King at home, while his services at Berlin had taught him all that could be learnt—and probably more than anyone else would have been able to learn—of the resources of the German Army. Whether or no if Grierson's life had been spared and he had occupied the post originally planned for him circumstances might have been different is an unanswerable question; Sir John French would at least have enjoyed help and advice which would have been invaluable in the days of the cruel retreat from Mons. The representative of the French Army on this occasion was General Castelnau, as devout a Catholic as he was a keen and able soldier of France. The King conceived an immediate liking for him, and with one of his happy inspirations bade one of his Equerries to carry to him the Victorian Order, an attention which, by his own admission, moved a very gallant soldier to tears.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE VISIT TO PARIS

FROM the beginning of the year an event of no little importance was impending. Thus far King George had not paid any of the complimentary visits so favoured by his father. Circumstances rather than inclination had forbidden them. The year 1911 had been absorbed by the Coronation; 1912 and 1913 had been overshadowed by troubles in the Balkans, while the condition of European politics was scarcely favourable to Court functions. On the 22nd of January, Paul Cambon telegraphed from Windsor Castle, where he was staying for some days, to his Prime Minister that the King would like to pay a return visit to the President of the Republic. It was a little difficult to fix a date; the King had told the Ambassador in confidence that he was very anxious as to the existing state of affairs in Ireland and very apprehensive as to a crisis which might occur in May or June. It would be scarcely possible to make any engagement for the summer, while the autumn was too far off, but if it would be agreeable to the President, the King would arrive in Paris about the 20th of April. The President was more than "agreeable", although the date proposed fell plump in the middle of the elections. The proposal was accepted with *empressement*, King George's visit would pre-

cede that of the King of Denmark, and the President's own journey to Russia would be fixed for July.

The King was determined that nothing should be left undone which could be done to make his stay in Paris a complete and conspicuous success. He might not, like his father, lay claim to ever having been a "bon Parisien", but he would show that his love for France was no less deep-rooted and his admiration no less sincere. Thus when the rumour reached him that the programme would not include a military review, the British Ambassador was at once despatched to the Elysée to beg that this item might not on any account be omitted as the King could not bear the thought of appearing to neglect the French Army.

Just now a little awkwardness arose respecting the Portuguese colonies, as there was a question of publishing in England an Anglo-German agreement of 1898. This was not unlikely to wound the susceptibilities of the French, who would certainly have read into it a design against themselves when, after Fashoda, the Anglo-French situation represented the very reverse of an *entente*. The King sent word that he was anxious the terms of the treaty should not be published at all, or anyhow that the output should be postponed till after his stay in Paris. Sir Edward Grey wholly shared the view of the King; M. Poincaré congratulated himself that the delay might well suffice to lay the whole matter to rest, and the prospective State visit was thus further sweetened.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The treaty was never published in England. Under its terms it might have happened that a small German enclave would have been found inside French territory.

The arrival of the King and Queen was fixed for the afternoon of the 21st of April, and that morning the Russian Ambassador hurriedly begged for an audience at the Elysée; he had been charged by his Government with a most important message: would the President urge upon the King how essential it was that England should reach, if not an alliance—which seemed outside the province of practical politics—some sort of understanding with Russia on the lines of the Franco-Russian naval agreement? M. Poincaré could only tell the impetuous Isvolsky that the King would certainly do nothing, and probably not say much, outside the knowledge of his Government; that M. Doumergue intended to talk the matter over with Sir Edward Grey—who would be in the King's suite—and that he would consult the President of the Council as to what he himself could say to the King.

Paris was looking her very best on a lovely spring day, and had no doubt as to the welcome she was going to offer; even when the President and Madame Poincaré drove along on their way to the little Porte Dauphine station, the avenues of the Champs Elysées and the Bois de Boulogne—which then boasted their beautiful chestnut and elm trees—were thronged with eager spectators who had heard much of, but had scarcely hitherto looked on, the King and Queen of England.

The train, its engine decorated with English flags, arrived to the moment; the necessary presentations were rapidly made, the Guard of Honour from the *Garde Republicaine* inspected, and the King, wearing his Admiral's uniform, took his seat with M. Poincaré by his side in the "*caleche*

*Présidentielle*" drawn by four black horses, the modesty of which as compared to the superb "turn-out" of the Royal carriages the President was prepared to admit. But the King had for the moment no thought for anything but the enormous and genuinely enthusiastic crowds—far exceeding what he had been led to expect—who had come out to greet him; his pleasure was undisguised and seemed to communicate itself to the gay folk who cheered with equal fervour the strains of "God save the King" and the "Marseillaise" as rendered with equal goodwill by military bands stationed all along the route to the Quai d'Orsay, where the State lodgings had been prepared. In a second carriage with Madame Poincaré came the Queen, at first evidently a little shy with a lady who was a total stranger to her, but no less evidently enchanted with the *accueil* which awaited her and which was scarcely less fervent than that accorded to the King. Sixty years earlier when Queen Victoria drove through Paris with the Empress Eugénie, then in the full flush of her triumphant beauty, there were those in the crowds to murmur: "Une belle femme, et une reine à côté." Now remarks were freely heard: "C'est une belle femme et une reine à la fois." Notes of admiration were also in the air for the pale blue toilette which the Queen had chosen. "C'est le printemps même" was murmured. Paris had been sure that Queen Mary would be sumptuously clad, but there had been some doubt as to whether the "élégance", which Paris holds so high, would be also observable. The verdict was to be entirely favourable: la Reine d'Angleterre, every woman ungrudgingly admitted, was dressed not only superbly but, in her own style, in faultless taste.

A few minutes' rest in their rooms at the Foreign Office and the King and Queen set out to pay their call at the Elysée. The President of a Republic may always be trusted to know and observe every jot and tittle of etiquette, and according to etiquette the President and Madame Poincaré preceded their guests to the "Salons de Tapisseries" and then brought them back through the "Salon des Aides-de-Camp" to the great central apartment, the windows of which looked out on a garden so fragrant in perfume and so riotous in blossom as to make any Londoner's mouth water. Then one of the King's happiest thoughts was put into effect. Five large medallions, the work of Desjardins, representing scenes in the life of Louis XIV., which sometime decorated the Statue of the King in the Place des Victoires, had found their way to Windsor Castle, where they had remained for over a century. "I take this opportunity", the King said in graceful phrase, "of restoring to France her own beautiful works of art."<sup>1</sup>

The banquet that evening was given in the great Salle des Fêtes, where the superb Gobelins succeeded in masking the sumptuous but hideous mural decorations but could do nothing to tone down the cruelly over-ornamented ceiling. The King in conversation with M. Poincaré referred again and again to his surprise and delight in the welcome he had just received. It was evident that he had been overwrought and depressed by troubles at home; Ireland had been sitting heavily in his thoughts and the gay demeanour of Paris had come as a refreshing draught, while after the

<sup>1</sup> They had been bought by the Agents of George III. after the Restoration and sent to Kew; when Kew ceased to be the King's residence they were transferred to Windsor.



spasm of criticisms and uninformed blame which—no less than in the matter of the Parliament Bill—had just been accorded to him in London, the spontaneous acclaim of a foreign people had been sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. The King confided his latest anxieties to the President; the Press, he said, had exaggerated the question of officers resigning their commissions, and the officers had not perhaps been fairly treated in having preliminary questions put to them; the military incident, however, he considered, had been closed but the grave question of Home Rule remained. "I cannot", the King vehemently exclaimed, "allow a civil war to break out; besides I have not the powers which some of the Conservatives accuse me of not exercising." "The King", so M. Poincaré wrote afterwards, "in talking has some difficulty in finding the right word, but he always finds it in the end and ultimately expresses his meaning with perfect clearness."

The President proposing the health of the King and Queen emphasised how powerful was the *Entente Cordiale* as a means of guaranteeing the peace of Europe. He reminded them that ten years had elapsed since the two governments had amicably settled their differences and that the agreement then made for which King Edward's foresight was largely responsible had given rise to a more general understanding which might well prove one of the surest pledges of European equilibrium. The King's reply was delivered in firm French with a slight British accent, which did nothing to mar the clarity of diction,<sup>1</sup> and in

<sup>1</sup> J'éprouve un plaisir tout particulier à me trouver au milieu du peuple français lors du dixième anniversaire de ces accords par lesquels nos deux pays ont réglé

neither speech was there any allusion to the Triple Entente, or anything said which might provoke the slightest soreness on the part of the Triple Alliance.

The British colony claimed and received attention at the Embassy the next morning, and then after a so-called *déjeuner intime* the King and Queen drove with the President and Madame Poincaré to the review at Vincennes on which the King had gracefully insisted. On entering the field the King and the President, in a landau drawn by artillery horses, trotted briskly between the lines of troops, while the Queen and Madame Poincaré in their six-horsed carriage with postilions in blue jackets and powdered wigs, proceeded to the Royal Pavilion, the Queen receiving a remarkable ovation. The inspection was followed by a fine, but rather dusty March Past, with a still finer but even dustier charge of the Infantry right up to the railings in front of the Royal Box.

From Vincennes every step of the way to the Hôtel de

pacifiquement toutes les questions qui les divisaient. C'est de ces accords que sont sorties les relations si intimes et si cordiales qui nous unissent aujourd'hui et grâce auxquelles il nous est permis de travailler à l'oeuvre humanitaire de la civilisation et de la paix. Je vous remercie, monsieur le Président, d'avoir rappelé que le nom de mon père bien-aimé restera toujours associé à cette Entente et je souscris de tout mon cœur à votre éloquente définition des desseins élevés et nobles que nos deux pays poursuivent en commun. Leur réalisation sera un bienfait pour les deux nations, en même temps qu'elle constituera le legs le plus précieux que nous puissions laisser aux générations à venir. La Reine et moi, nous n'oublierons jamais la réception si cordiale qui nous a été accordée à notre arrivée et qui sera très hautement appréciée dans mon pays. Je suis heureux de penser que pendant notre séjour nous aurons le plaisir d'admirer et d'apprécier ce que vous venez d'appeler si justement quelques éléments de votre caractère national. Ce sont ces éléments qui ont élevé la France à un si haut degré de civilisation et de prospérité; c'est surtout grâce à eux qu'elle occupe si dignement et si fièrement sa place dans le monde.

Ville—where flowery speeches had been prepared<sup>1</sup>—there were full-throated cheers such as one seldom hears in France, nor surely did it occur to anyone in those holiday crowds that within four short months France would not be cheering the King of England, but calling upon him to send his armies to defend an ally in the hour of danger and utter need.

The British Embassy being British soil, the King and Queen were the host and hostess at the dinner that evening, the Ambassador and Ambassadors doing the honours in another room. The dinner was good but short, and while it was in progress, every street in the centre of Paris was blocked with motor cars and carriages conveying all that was distinguished in Paris to the gala at the Opera House, under illuminations even more dazzling than the night before. A pretty bit of ritual—survival of a custom dating from Louis Quatorze—awaited their Majesties on their arrival at the Subscribers' Entrance, when two footmen, wearing chains of office, walked backwards with unruffled dignity bearing five-branched silver candelabra which lighted the way to the Royal salon. To the programme the audience paid little attention, although they could not resist applauding Mademoiselle Zambelli, in the "Fête chez Thérèse"; all eyes were fixed, contrary to usual etiquette, on the occupants of the huge and terribly decorative Presidential Box,

<sup>1</sup> The Prefect of the Seine said, "Paris to-day salutes with enthusiasm your Majesty, who, even as Duke of York, and Admiral of the British Fleet personified the destiny of a nation whose glory the sea will always be." The President of the Municipal Council regretted that he had not, like Raleigh, a *manteau de cour* to spread at the Queen's feet as she crossed the threshold of the Hôtel de Ville which 'her charm adorns and her smile illumines'.

from which, however, the Queen and her jewels shone out like a star. Perhaps however, her great moment was that when, on leaving the box at the end of the performance, she stood at the top of the grand staircase, superb in cloth of gold and wearing her great jewels as she alone can wear them. Groups of hardened Parisians were gathered at the foot of the staircase, and a swelling buzz of irrepressible admiration went out which seemed to permeate the whole house and to infect spectators assembled at the gates of the Opera House; a tribute wrung from men and women usually more prone to criticise than to applaud.

At the Marquis de Breteuil's, King Edward had first met M. Declassé and had often met men held in high honour in France, and at his beautiful house in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne the Marquis de Breteuil the next noon invited many of King Edward's friends to meet King Edward's son and daughter-in-law. The morning had been busy with inspections of hospitals and exhibitions; the afternoon was devoted to Auteuil where five rather poorly contested races were named after the King's residences. The appearance of the King and Queen on the balcony of the Tribune was greeted with frenzied salutations of "Vive le Roi! Vive la Reine!" Here again the Queen scored another distinct feminine success; her fuchsia coloured dress, the high-necked band which she specially affected, her wonderful pearls, the ostrich plumes which garnished her hat were all the subjects of excited discussion, and one fair observer after another was heard to remark: "*Elle a beaucoup de dignité, elle a son chic à elle.*"

To meet the royal guests at tea were invited, among others,

Madame Waddington, whom the Queen had known well at the French Embassy in London, the Marquis de Ganay, Prince and Princess Murat, and the Duchess d'Uzès. A few years earlier French imagination might have boggled at the idea of a Royalist Duchess, the mother of two other Royalist duchesses, sipping her tea alongside the wife of the President of the Republic. So far there had been no flavour of politics in any conversation, but at the dinner that evening at the Quai d'Orsay M. Poincaré took heart of grace and alluded to the Tsar's earnest desire for some agreement with Great Britain. "Yes, indeed," was the King's reply without any circumlocution. "It would be a very good thing if we also could have some sort of naval agreement with Russia. You must talk about it to Sir Edward Grey."

The banquet at the Quai d'Orsay had been a greater triumph of gastronomy even than the Embassy dinner, and Lord Houghton's proverb that "Out of the fulness of the mouth the heart speaketh" was perhaps to be illustrated.

Dinner was scarcely over before the President did indeed speak plainly to Sir Edward Grey. He told him that in France, no less than in England, a permanent alliance with an absolute monarchy was always a difficult matter: the French Constitution was, if possible, even further than the British from such a form of government; it was not an alliance which the Tsar was now asking for, but only a defensive naval agreement, limited to technical considerations, which would leave perfect freedom of action to the two countries. Sir Edward was, personally, by no means opposed to the idea, but Mr. Asquith must, of course, be consulted: he suggested they could begin by giving Russia the particulars of



the Franco-British agreements, as to which Russia wanted to be informed; any proposals from that country could then be calmly awaited, and, anyhow, there would be no idea of any military Convention, as, should the occasion arise, it would be in France where England would devote all the armed support it could give.

Towards noon the next day the President and Madame Poincaré called for the King and Queen at the Quai d'Orsay and escorted them along the Rue Constantine—the street in which lived the Duchesse de Mouchy, the Marquise de Gallifet, and other friends of King George's parents—to the Gare des Invalides, where the enthusiasm of the British colony vied with, but by no means outdid, that of the French folk who had thronged the precincts and the platform to wave a last greeting.

The fêtes were over; it only remained for the King and Queen to give their last smile to the town which had received them so nobly, and to bid farewell to the great Frenchman who had organised that reception so admirably. How little did King and President think that their next meeting would be in a little country town amidst their soldiers and within sound of the German guns.

“We shall never forget the warmth and enthusiasm of our reception; wherever we went during our happy stay in Paris we have been deeply impressed.” Such were the first words of the King on landing at Dover, and they were words not lightly uttered. No wonder, indeed, that the happenings of the last few days should have engraved themselves indelibly on the minds of those so largely concerned

in them; Paris—and what Paris said on any day, France would say on the morrow—was too well informed, too logical, too apprehensive of the German menace not to realise the *entente* at its full value; patriotism, perhaps not untinged with self-interest, would have sufficed to give a hearty welcome to the arch-representative of the country with which such important relations existed. But that might have been all. King George and Queen Mary knew little of Paris and were scarcely known there; in all their lives they had hardly spent a month in the city and that only as distinguished tourists. The King, unlike his father, had seldom, if ever, been seen in the *coulisses* of a French theatre or in the salons of a French club. The Queen had given all her custom to British trade and had never favoured the Paris *couturières*. With the exception of Mr. and Mrs. Standish, who were, of course, bidden to the Embassy dinner, and Madame Waddington, they had no personal friends in Paris. At the Elysée, but for the Spanish Ambassador, all the guests had hitherto been totally unknown to them. Yet in three days a King and Queen—both of them British to the bone—had not only achieved a signal official success that was perhaps expected of them, but by sheer *savoir faire*, by allowing themselves to be infected with that sense of enjoyment so dear to a people who are masters in the art of enjoyment, two hitherto strangers to Paris had achieved a measure of personal popularity which, however it baffles description, was wholly impossible to deny. Paris before the arrival of the King and Queen had laid herself out to give them a warm and sincere welcome; Paris before their departure had taken them joyously in her arms and would

hold them there even in the dark and dangerous years which awaited her. M. Poincaré was far from overstating the case when he wrote: "Without exaggerating the diplomatic consequences of my visit to the King in 1913 and of the visit which His Majesty has just paid us in this month of April 1914, I can surely say that they have both contributed to strengthen the *entente cordiale*, and in a Europe whose equilibrium is perpetually threatened, such a result has no little importance."

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE WAR AND AFTER

THE events which mark the reign of King George during and after the War form so largely the theme of current writing and are so constantly the subject of controversy that only a rough outline of them should fall within the scope of this volume.

If, on the King's return from Paris, Irish troubles were thick and even the Secretary for War and the Chief of the Staff were entangled in their meshes, the European sky was wholly serene until there appeared the dark midsummer cloud which, ephemeral as it seemed, was to presage a tempest of blood and fire. On June 29, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his Consort were murdered at Serajevo. The unhappy Prince had many intimate friends in England, but even by them the political importance of the crime was scarcely appreciated, whilst Serajevo may have taxed their geographical knowledge. Within a few short days, however, Austria was seen to level a pistol at Serbia, and the Kaiser was to lay his powerful finger on the trigger. And if the firearm were for the moment levelled at a petty State, it was intended that the bullet should eventually pierce the heart of Britain. "*C'est le ton qui fait la musique*", and

a note of hate was quickly and accurately struck—and to resound for the period of the War—in a favourite German mouthpiece: “We have taken the field against Russia and France, but at bottom it is England we are fighting everywhere. We must prove to Russia the superiority of our culture and of our military might. We must force France on to her knees until she chokes. It is not yet time to offer terms. But between Russia and Germany there is no insoluble problem. France, too, fights chiefly for honour’s sake. It is from England we must wring the uttermost price for this gigantic struggle, however dearly others may have to pay for the help they have given her.”<sup>1</sup>

When, if ever, the archives of Europe give to the light of day their secrets, the full and true story, with all its intrigues and complexities, may be told of how a supreme trial of strength was forced upon a civilised world; as regards the Kaiser, published documents have at least made it clear that through four weeks, while Germany and Austria were busy devising how to set going a great military engine, considerations of diplomacy and humanity, the entreaties of the Rulers of Russia and England, the representations of his own Ambassadors in Paris and London, and even the arguments of some of his cooler and more far-seeing counsellors fell on deaf ears. It would have been about as easy just then to make the Nile desert cold or the Baltic shores tropical as to deflect a haughty autocrat from the purpose he had harboured for years; the Serajevo tragedy had enabled him to catch the bit in his teeth, and to control him would be to try and check a bolting horse with a silk thread.

<sup>1</sup> *Hamburger Nachrichten.*



On the 30th July, M. Jules Cambon, French Ambassador in Berlin, telegraphed to the President of the French Republic: "Germans are quite hopeful as to successful issue of their fight against France and Russia, if these are unsupported. Nothing but the chance of English intervention affects the Emperor, his Government or German interests." The Director of Protocols was at once despatched to London with an appeal from the President to the King, an appeal as passionate in tone as it was diplomatic in terms. "I verily believe"—and M. Poincaré did in very truth believe it—"that the best chance of peace depends on what the British Government now says and does." It is possible to think that if King George had been an absolute monarch, his prompt reply would have been altogether satisfying to the soul of the President. Four months later, when King and President met in a ravaged country and under the growl of the German artillery, the matter of the letter was again alluded to. "I have always thought myself", King George then said,<sup>1</sup> "that England ought to take the field against Germany if Germany should attack France, but I was obliged to be very careful in my reply to your letter, because my Government had not made up its mind on the matter, and because public opinion was not prepared for any intervention on our part. I told Grey that it was for him to let the country know the rights and wrongs of the situation, and the people would then certainly understand that England could not remain aloof; as a matter of fact, Grey had very little difficulty in opening the eyes of a large majority of our people."

The King took but a bare night to consult with the Prime

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of M. Poincaré.*

Minister as to this weighty missive, and within twenty-four hours an autograph letter was on its way to be delivered into the President's hands:

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *August 1, 1914.*

DEAR AND GREAT FRIEND,

I most highly appreciate the sentiments which moved you to write to me in so cordial and friendly a spirit, and I am grateful to you for having stated your views so fully and frankly.

You may be assured that the present situation in Europe has been the cause of much anxiety and pre-occupation to me, and I am glad to think that our two Governments have worked so amicably together in endeavouring to find a peaceful solution of the questions at issue.

It would be a source of real satisfaction to me if our united efforts were to meet with success, and I am still not without hope that the terrible events which seem so near may be averted.

I admire the restraint which you and your Government are exercising in refraining from taking undue military measures on the frontier, and not adopting an attitude which could in any wise be interpreted as a provocative one.

I am, personally, using my best endeavours with the Emperors of Russia and of Germany towards finding some solution by which actual military operations may at any rate be postponed, and time be thus given for calm discussion between the Powers. I intend to prosecute these efforts without intermission so long as any hope remains of an amicable settlement.

As to the attitude of my country, events are changing so rapidly that it is difficult to forecast future developments;

but you may be assured that my Government will continue to discuss freely and frankly any point which might arise of interest to our two nations with M. Cambon.

Believe me, M. le Président,

GEORGE R. I.

The King moreover telegraphed to the Kaiser:

I cannot help thinking [so ran a message which was little less than an entreaty] that some misunderstanding has produced this deadlock. I am most anxious not to miss any possibility of avoiding the terrible calamity which at present threatens the whole world. I, therefore, make a personal appeal to you to remove the misapprehension [as to Russian mobilisation] which I feel must have occurred, and to leave still open grounds for negotiation and possible peace. If you think that I can in any way contribute to that all-important purpose, I will do everything in my power to assist in reopening the interrupted conversations between the Powers concerned. I feel confident that you are as anxious as I am that all that is possible should be done to secure the peace of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The thought of the German Emperor being desirous of peace may well have provoked a bitter smile as the writer penned the telegram; but through the dark years to follow he may well have been glad to remember that in his eleventh-hour effort to secure at least a halt on the path to war, he did not shrink from attributing to his foeman a merit of which he knew him to be totally devoid.

And on the 3rd August, while Sir Edward Grey was ex-

<sup>1</sup> Further letters passed the King and the President on the 5th August.

plaining to an excited House of Commons the terms of the ultimatum to Germany, there was lying in the King's hands a message to which there could be but one reply:

Mindful of the numerous marks of friendship of your Majesty and of your Majesty's predecessors, as well as the friendly attitude of Great Britain in 1870 and of the proofs of sympathy which she has once again shown us, I make the supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty's Government to safeguard the neutrality of Belgium.

So telegraphed King Albert, under an insult to which no King or country could submit. Well might the King of England say, as regards his own attitude and action: "My God, what else could we do?"

The breach between Germany and England became definitive on Tuesday, August 4, and with the declaration of war, the King, without fuss or ostentation, let it be known that to the prosecution of the war to a victorious issue he would dedicate himself, body and soul: he had laboured for peace and even bent himself to sue for it, but when the message of peace was flung back, it only remained for him to call upon his legions to man a great military structure—the necessity for which he was quick to appreciate. His line of conduct was quickly indicated: he would do everything to encourage alike his troops and his people,<sup>1</sup> but he would interfere in no detail, nor use his influ-

<sup>1</sup> The King only demurred when one of his Ministers suggested that if Buckingham Palace were to be bombed by German aircraft it would, anyhow, have a very stimulating effect upon the people. "Yes, but rather a depressing effect on me," was the mild rejoinder.

ence for any personal reason or on behalf of any personal friend. He would be always accessible to his Ministers, and for that reason would leave London as little as possible, but he would never add to ministerial work and worry by frequent or inopportune summons to his presence. His time, his energies, his whole strength of body and mind would be at the disposal of his country; nor would there be any inconvenience or privation, or risk or loss, which he would not share with his subjects.

Before the War had been in progress many weeks a measure was submitted to the King the value of which he had already recognised and to which he unhesitatingly gave his endorsement. Complaints were being freely bandied about that the Holy See showed no little disposition to favour in many ways the Central Powers; the real answer was that it could scarcely be otherwise, since Germany and Austria were the only belligerents powerfully represented at the Vatican, where they were thus able to pour out, without fear of contradiction, their pernicious propaganda. It had been held by many statesmen, from Mr. Gladstone onwards, that the system of approaching the Pope, if at all, by very round-about methods was highly objectionable, and that we suffered grave disabilities from having no direct and recognised access to the Holy Father. Pre-war difficulties became grave obstacles when war was waging, a fact which the French President recognised, although, unlike ourselves, he was not able to remove them. With very little delay, the Foreign Office arranged to despatch a Special Envoy to Rome, who would, in many matters, represent not only England but the *entente* in stemming a stream of enemy



falsehoods. So successful proved the appointment that the Special Envoy was soon to give way to a permanent Minister to the Vatican, who could deal with the interests of a huge group of the British Sovereign's subjects.

For a Sailor King who had loved his profession there may have been just a crumb of satisfaction in that the British Navy was in action on August 5, a fortnight before the first British rifle was fired on land; the disappointment would have been the keener when the German cruisers *Goeben* and *Breslau* escaped from the Allied fleet and, pursuing their way through the Straits of Messina, submitted themselves for purchase by the Porte. "The constant attention of the King to the navy, his own career in it, and his interest in all European problems have been a fitting preparation for this hour." So was worded, in the early days of the War, a well-inspired note in the *Tribuna*, and the Italian journal could have spoken no truer words. In all that affected the senior service the King was to take not only a keen but an expert interest. He was an early caller at the Admiralty and from him no Admiralty secret was to be withheld; his trips to the Grand Fleet were frequent, but were always arranged with studied care for the convenience of all, of whatever rank, who served in it. On many naval matters his advice would be sought no less than his sanction; no trouble was too great for him to take if any benefit could accrue to the seafaring man: from the beginning to the end of hostilities no naval manœuvre or move was outside his knowledge, and few took place without their being the subject of his well-judged comments.

It is not within public knowledge whether the King

were at first disposed to endorse Kitchener's view that the War would last three years if Russia should remain in the field and a further year if she were to retire from it, or whether he lent a willing ear to the roseate and constantly renewed assurances of the Commander-in-Chief that a decision in our favour on the Western Front would be registered within a few months.<sup>1</sup> It is certain that King George wholeheartedly accepted—although he could not immediately understand—the dictum of his War Secretary that England must strip herself to fight to the death; whether our troops advanced, retired, or held their ground it was not—as he was seriously told—a question of reinforcing the miniature army appointed to take the field, but of creating and equipping a real army which should in the near future pit itself effectively against the armed forces of the German Empire, and should, moreover, rise to its full strength just when the enemy would be sensible of a diminution in his own resources of man-power. With the first clear call to arms, eager recruits poured in from city and town, from village and countryside, from moor and mine, from field and factory: squire and yokel, peer and peasant. The men of England knew as if by instinct that their Sovereign had need of them, and this was all-sufficient to bring them in ever-increasing streams to the colours.

Nor did the King in any way resent that the new armies as they came into being were, as if automatically, labelled with the name of the soldier-statesman to whose forceful

<sup>1</sup> "The King had half an hour's talk with French and was glad to find him so optimistic and practically regarding the Germans as beaten," was a message Kitchener received from Buckingham Palace on September 6th, 1915.

genius their creation was due. Here, as all through the years while the safety and honour of the country were at stake, the King let it be known that in his opinion, so long as the work was really well done, the workman was a matter of secondary importance; so long as the War was won, the parts which each man, including himself, played in it could be left to the tribunal of posterity.

"I have implicit confidence in you, my soldiers. Duty is your watchword, and I know your duty will be nobly done.

"I shall follow your every movement with deepest interest and mark with eager satisfaction your daily progress; indeed, your welfare will never be absent from my thoughts.

"I pray God to bless you and guard you and bring you back victorious."

So was worded King George's promise to the soldiers going overseas, and it was a promise to be verified to the letter.

If throughout the War the King did not enter the War Office—where the temporary structural additions were scarcely less remarkable than the buzzing activities—he was a frequent visitor to Aldershot, Salisbury Plain, and other training centres; he welcomed personally Colonial contingents on their arrival in the mother country, and would often quietly bid God-speed to units about to go overseas.<sup>1</sup> Every new invention and nearly every new suggestion for the arming or equipment or comfort of the men in the line

<sup>1</sup> Formal leave-takings were discontinued and the Queen graciously forewent a visit to her regiment, the 18th Hussars, in order not to attract attention to their departure.

and the precise field strength in each theatre of war were subjects on which he demanded close and constant information. Lack of military training forbade, of course, any grasp of strategy, although there was evinced a steady determination to follow intelligently the course of operations, whether in France or in the East, and to appreciate clearly the success, or lack of it, which attended each of them.

In Kitchener's lifetime a confidential emissary—generally Colonel Wigram—was in the habit of calling every morning to hear any report that had come in during the night, and to learn the views of the War Secretary as to the immediate situation. Later on, the Chief of the staff,<sup>1</sup> who had been the King's mentor at the manœuvres of 1912, or the Director of Military Operations,<sup>2</sup> would call frequently, if not daily, at the Palace to give an account of current and say what he could of prospective events, and to mark and correct the maps furnished by the War Office. A sudden entrant into the room might well have found Sovereign and General on their knees on the floor examining and discussing the actual position occupied by troops in every theatre of war. So interested would be the King in the interviews which he granted to his responsible advisers, that these would sometimes respectfully suggest that his flow of language conspired with pressure of time to prevent their imparting to him many points they wished to disclose.

To his troops in France and Belgium the King paid repeated visits, which, however happy in thought and deed

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Robertson.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Frederick Maurice.

were not always crowned with the entire success they deserved, perhaps because they were visits with a strict time-limit imposed on them. The King of England was in this matter at a disadvantage with the other belligerent rulers, who were on their own terrain and could, without fuss or favour, be in and out of their own lines—the only exception being the French President, whose visits to the Front were, anyhow at first, strongly discouraged by the Generalissimo. After his first stay at St. Omer in 1914, the King was not always the guest of the Commander-in-Chief; a château would be taken for him, and a full—perhaps over-full—programme drawn up with elaborate—perhaps too elaborate—care to occupy every moment of his days. An irksome precision as to time-tables and a sense of hurry would ensue; inspections would be curtailed and pleasant conversations cut short: there was thus, now and again, something to cool the rapturous greetings which the King would have continuously received had he been allowed perfect freedom of movement, entire elasticity as to time, and larger opportunities to get into touch with the men in the line.

Perhaps, in a sense, the most successful—if the most painful—of the King's journeys to France was in Holy Week, 1918, just when the desperate German onrush had been made. He lodged then at "Visitors Château", on the borders of the field of Agincourt; he did no more than call at G.H.Q. and spent three days and evenings in his motor, going hither and thither, speaking to, congratulating and sympathising with worn, weary and battered men whom he met on the roads, and to whose warm hearts his simple, kindly words went home.



There is always a tendency to invest with something like lack of sympathy anyone who lends himself but little to anecdote and makes slender appeal to anything like romance. To attribute to King George the eager desire and entire ability to please all and everybody, which marked his father's daily life, would be to make a misstatement; but on the other hand, it might be difficult to point to anyone more apt to be touched to the quick by the infirmities of others. From the first arrival of the wounded in England, the King would frequent the hospitals, in no perfunctory way, and it was said that no trained physician could boast a better "bedside manner." His sympathy never savoured of the pity which the disabled soldier dislikes so much; enquiries were always free of any undue or inopportune intrusion, gifts were obviously gifts of the heart as well as of the head and hand, and manly words would then—as they do now in the Homes for those on whom the War has felt its deadly mark—act as a tonic to the men who had spared nothing and shrunk from nothing in their contribution to the Great Cause.

An ugly accident was to occur in October 1915. The King had inspected the English camps at Havre, paid a visit to the French armies and won their hearts with some admirably spoken words, and—in company with the French President—had reviewed some of his own troops. On the 28th he was riding out of a field, when a group of the Air Force rushed towards him with loud cheers, and his charger, which had been lent by Sir Douglas Haig, reared and fell back on him, inflicting very severe bruises and what at first appeared to be even more serious injuries. There were, of

course, heard murmurs that the King's mount had been under-schooled and over-fed for so important an occasion; that the King, though a pretty horseman, was not a sufficiently powerful rider to control a horse who wanted a good deal of leg pressure; that precautions ought to have been taken to prevent any such accident as had happened, and so forth—the real truth being that the King's own charger should have been sent over to France, and that he should not have been dependent on the horse of any other man, even if that man were the Commander of the First Army. The Prince of Wales, who was with his father at the time, came at once to England to give the Queen the details of the unhappy incident; four days later the King was able to cross the Channel, under medical supervision, although he was confined to bed for some time afterwards, and several weeks elapsed before he wholly recovered. The occurrence was the more unfortunate because it prevented the King from welcoming General Joffre on his visit to London, where he came on the 29th to urge, in his creamiest and most impressive tones, the importance of Salonika as a field for action.

If through many years the King had watched with close attention the moves on the European chess-board, his attention was now to be compelled to the study—and that by no means only as spectator—of a constantly shifting international situation: for over four years the civilised world was to stand to arms, and in those battles on the fate of which hung the destinies of the world, his own armed forces were eventually to play the leading part. There must have

been for him days of dark anxiety and hours of bitter disappointment, no less than occasions for exultant satisfaction; it is at least sure that never for one moment did the British Sovereign falter in his belief that, however fierce the fight and however weary the warfare, there could be but one end, and to that end his troops would, sooner or later, be victoriously led.

At the close of the year 1914 the main problem was no longer how to check the German campaign of conquest in France, but how best to win the War. Italy was still neutral and would probably require a well-sweetened cup if her active help were to be secured; Serbia was isolated and was being haughtily threatened with castigation by Austria; Roumania, though sympathetic, was afraid to move while large Austrian armies were near her frontier, the more so as she could see no direct assistance coming from the *entente* Powers; Greece was facing both ways; Bulgaria was openly coquetting with the Central Powers. Of the other European neutrals, Sweden leaned a little towards Germany, less from any fondness for that country than from fear of Russia; Norway was heart and mind with England; Holland balanced her scales evenly; Spain had a natural affection for Catholic Austria, but her King made little secret of his liking for all that France and England meant to him, and if his conduct, as a great neutral, was correctitude itself, his inner wishes left no room for doubt.

The War was quickly to confound the predictions of many Chiefs of General Staffs. The Russian steamroller, the dread of which had been Germany's special plea for unsheathing the sword, proved a far less weighty engine than was anti-

cipated, and the advantages which Germany sucked from violating the neutrality of Belgium proved wholly disproportionate to the consequences entailed. The French fortified frontiers would certainly have fallen, no less easily than Namur and Antwerp, to the German howitzers, and the Kaiser's dastardly threat to his Cousin of Belgium might well have remained unwritten.

The stalemate in France and Flanders and the early Russian failures suggested the expediency of finding a way round, and as the neutral States apparently afforded a path to the enemy's flanks, they became counters in a diplomatic game in which cajolery, coaxing, veiled menace, and prospects of lavish reward were all employed. Turkey having bound herself to the Central Powers by a treaty of alliance, August 1, 1914, the eyes of the *entente* at once rested upon Italy, while the eyes of Italy roved at first from side to side. The guns had been scarcely trained for action before she informed her former Allies that her neutrality would be an expensive commodity, and with the growing strength of the *entente* Powers, she steadily increased her demands, the settlement of which she said must be immediate. The French Ambassador in London could scarcely be blamed for murmuring, "*Nos bon amis les Italiens attendent avec impatience le moment pour voler au secours des vainqueurs.*"

Germany strained every nerve to stave off an Italian declaration of war. Prince Bulow was summoned from retirement and sent, with the crafty Erzberger to second his efforts, to Rome, where he and his wife were highly popular. Baron Sonnino, who had succeeded the somewhat vacillating San Giuliano, had at one time been very pro-German,

but on entering the Salandra Cabinet he accepted the principle of his Chief: "What is needed is a freedom from all preconceptions and prejudices, from every sentiment except that of sacred egoism." Austria was asked what price she would pay for Italian neutrality, and the Allies what they would pay for Italian intervention. Russia considered—and France and England agreed with her—that the Italian demands were just a little extravagant; however, force of circumstances at this juncture compelled their acceptance, a step which the Grand Duke Nicholas was prompted to recommend to the Tsar by a timely telegram from the War Office to the effect that a military success the Russian Generalissimo had recently scored would be deprived of much of its fruit if Italy did not at once arm. Italy's *pourparlers* with Austria after signing the Treaty of London on April 28, 1915, were only to obtain a pretext for a declaration of war, which was pronounced exactly a month later, although by a curious anomaly there was no technical state of war between Italy and Germany until August of the following year. Next to Italy, it was, above all things, necessary to win the Balkan States to one side or the other, and among other motives for the Dardanelles enterprise was its expected effect on Greece and Bulgaria. The King of the Hellenes, compelled by peculiar circumstances—military, dynastic, domestic, and financial—to lean heavily upon his Imperial brother-in-law, was, under the influence of Venizelos, not indisposed at first to the Dardanelles undertaking. What he favoured, however, his General Staff disfavoured, while Russia was nervous lest a Greek participation might awaken Greek dreams of possession of Byzantium. Rebuffed and dis-



couraged, Constantine's regard for Germany, where he had received his military training, got the upper hand, and Venizelos resigned. Bulgaria—where our own diplomacy was not too happily illustrated—stung by the Russian-inspired treatment she had received from Roumania, and constantly ill-disposed towards Serbia, was inclined towards the Central Powers, and the Balkan States were to be both a hot-bed of intrigue and a theatre of minor military tragedies. We could not assign Macedonia to Bulgaria without estranging Serbia, nor the Dobrudja without sacrificing Roumania, and it was suggested at the time that we lost Bulgaria for much the same reason that we gained Italy; the difference was that Italy backed the right horse, while Bulgaria staked her all on a loser.

The collapse of the Russian armies, the ill-success of the Dardanelles enterprise and hatred for Serbia decided Bulgaria to join the Central Powers and to send her troops across the Serbian frontier. Venizelos, in ignorance that King Constantine had at the moment one hand in Ferdinand's suède glove and the other in Wilhelm's mailed fist, announced that Greece would not tolerate Bulgarian aggression against Serbia, ordered mobilisation and begged England and France to send 150,000 men to Salonika. But Venizelos was again to be eclipsed, and his Sovereign proclaimed Greek neutrality in a Serbo-Bulgarian War. Serbia was to be over-run by Germano-Austro-Bulgarian armies; the Allies were committed to the Salonika expedition, the Dardanelles expedition must shortly be broken off, and Kitchener, hurrying from Mudros to Athens, could barely dissuade Constantine—by now firmly convinced that Ger-



*President Wilson calls on King George.*



many would win the War—from throwing in his lot with the Central Powers.

“What am I to do when Germany threatens me with a million men?” lamented the unhappy ruler.

“Remember the four millions England will have in the field next year”, came the quick retort.

The failure of the German Verdun offensive, the success of the Brussilov offensive, and the progress made by the Allied armies on the Somme, coupled with large promises of accessions of territory, finally brought over Roumania—now considerably under the influence of her beautiful British-born Queen—to the cause of the *entente*. A British loan of five millions had been arranged January 1915, whilst treaties with Italy and Russia were signed as early as September 1914. But, nervous of blows she might get from Turkey and Bulgaria, Roumania must for the moment hold her hand. Russian reverses in 1915 had rendered Roumania intervention too perilous, even had Sazonoff been prepared to gratify Bratiano’s rather exorbitant claims; but French pressure was brought to bear on Sazanoff’s successor, Baron Sturmer, who rather sulkily agreed to Roumanian terms, and on August 28, 1916, Roumania directed her forces on the coveted provinces. But Marshal von Hindenburg, who, with General Ludendorff, had replaced Falkenhayn in supreme command, scraped together troops to deal with this new foe, strengthened them later with some Turks, and put the ex-Chief of the Staff in charge of them. The political General Sarraill found himself unable to make any substantial progress from Salonika; Russian help failed to material-

ise, and the Roumanian campaign, however valuable its indirect results on the final issue, ended unhappily and ingloriously by the rout of the Roumanian armies and the occupation of Bucharest, December 5, 1916, by the enemy.

Two events now occurred destined profoundly to modify the whole conduct of the War. Germany determined to put her faith in unrestricted submarine warfare, which she thought would knock out England within five months: on land she thought to remain on the defensive, and planned to shorten her lines to do this by economising men. She informed America of her decision to abandon any restrictions on submarine boat warfare; on January 31, shortly afterwards was begun the skilful withdrawal to the Hindenburg line.

Disaster had for long been impending in Russia; on March 8, 1917, the Revolution raised its head, and with the abdication of the Tsar a week later the Russian Army sank into demoralisation which rendered nothing but spasmodic a summer offensive unwillingly undertaken under pressure from the *entente*.

The year 1917 saw the collapse of the Nivelle offensive, Haig's campaign in Flanders—altogether necessary if France were to be given time to steady and refresh her exhausted military forces, the blow in the air at Cambrai, and the successful Austro-German offensive against Italy. But if the balance of military success seemed to lie with the Central Powers, the strain upon their economic life due to the blockade, the exhaustion due to continuous fighting, the shortage in foodstuffs and raw materials, was fast reducing them to prostration.



Weak, if well meant, efforts to end hostilities made by the Emperor Karl were, anyhow, doomed to failure by the impossibility of gratifying Italian appetites; nor was the Vatican any happier with rather belated proposals submitted in the late summer. In November of this year Krensky was overthrown by the Bolsheviks, and on March 3, 1918, there was signed the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. Separate treaties were also signed with the Ukraine and Finland; and poor Roumania, now adrift from her great Allies, was forced to plead for a peace which could not be otherwise than humiliating.

On March 21, 1918, Ludendorff opened the tremendous St. Michael assault, and for months there was a surge and resurgence of desperate struggle. Foch, appointed to the supreme command, was, however, able to deal with the German blows struck on April 9 and May 27, reinforcements poured in from the United States, and a renewed desperate effort by Ludendorff was checked by the French Generalissimo's counter-stroke at Château-Thierry. On August 8, Rawlinson started the battle of Amiens, to score so heavily as probably to suggest to Ludendorff that "Gott" was no longer "mit uns", and to persuade him that a German victory was altogether outside his grasp. And by now the British Commander-in-Chief, although he secured Foch's consent to break off the battle of Amiens, was convinced that the German pulse, which had been beating too rapidly for many weeks, was weakening to stopping-point, and that the hour for the Allies to strike home had come.

It was about this time that a portentous memorandum

may well have been submitted for the King's perusal. The document was over the signature of the Chief of the Staff, and probably enjoyed Mr. Lloyd George's *imprimatur*, although the geographical points involved may have rather bewildered the Minister. The main thesis, urged with no little dialectical skill, was that preparations should be complete for a final Allied offensive in July 1919; in other words, the War, with all its hideous cost of blood and treasure, was to be protracted for another year. It was also foreshadowed, among other dark possibilities, that Sir Douglas Haig<sup>1</sup> might be forced to abandon the Channel ports; that the enemy might capture Paris, or might drive a complete wedge between the Allied armies. The Sovereign may have remembered Kitchener's dictum that "the War will be won by the last million who will be put as trained men into the field". It would be a minor consideration that, with the postponement of the issue, the last million men to take the field would be not British but Americans; for the King there would arise the far greater consideration that—if the forecast of Sir Henry Wilson were accepted—his soldiers must, for twelve more months, march and toil and bleed, although, as their Sovereign well knew, they would surely endure to the end.

The memorandum made no appeal to Haig, and it is possible to think that the constant support and quick sympathy which through the three years of his command he had received, whether in success or reverse, from his august master, now nerved him for a weighty resolve; he was about to

<sup>1</sup> Sir Douglas Haig replaced Sir John French in the field late in November, 1915. The change of command had been imminent ever since the Battle of Loos but the King, with infinite tact, asked that if possible the recall of Sir John to Home duties might take place during Lord Kitchener's absence in the Near East.

assume entire responsibility for a course of action which he believed would bring Germany to her knees in the immediate future. He bluntly told a still sceptical Government in London that in his deliberate opinion finality could be found before the autumn suns should set. Thus, on the initiation and sole responsibility of the soldier who knew that whatever opposition he might receive from politicians, he enjoyed the King's implicit trust, there was taken the decision to assault the Hindenburg line, and in the last days of September that line was assaulted and broken. Thenceforth there was to be no backward glance; master-stroke followed master-stroke in swift succession, until on November 11 the "Cease Fire" sounded and a breathless world could rest upon its arms.

To her friends and allies the collapse of Germany had for some time appeared imminent, and as early as September 25 Bulgaria threw up the sponge and sued for peace. Less than a week later General Allenby<sup>1</sup> resumed his victorious advance and entered Damascus, and on the 31st of October Turkey appended her signature to an armistice which opened the Straits to the Allies.

Much earlier than all this, Ludendorff, knowing his army to be in grave danger and thinking that if he could only gain time something might turn up, urged that proposals should be set afoot for peace. The Allies, however, were neither to be deceived nor denied, and continued to press the fighting, while the German people themselves accepted the peace proposals as a signal of surrender. The Hapsburg monarchy, undermined by racial dissensions, broke asunder,

<sup>1</sup> Later Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby.

and local Governments proclaimed their autonomy, while on October 23 an Italian offensive broke the Piave front, and an armistice was signed on November 3. With the German fleet in mutiny at the end of October, a wave of revolution swept over the country and a Republic was proclaimed in Berlin with the Socialist Herr Ebert as President.

Ten days after the German delegates had gloomily surrendered to the French Generalissimo, Parliament was prorogued. "My Lords and Gentlemen—The occasion on which I address you marks the close of a period which will be for ever memorable in the history of our country. The War, upon which all the energies of my peoples throughout my dominions have for more than four years been concentrated, has at length been brought to a triumphant issue." Such was the opening phrase of a King's Speech delivered under conditions which have perhaps no precedent in history.

At the earliest opportunity, on the 27th November, the King, with two of his sons, set out on a visit to Paris and for a fortnight's tour in France and Belgium, whence he returned to receive, with every mark of honour, Haig and his Army Commanders on their entry into London, and to offer a State banquet to President Wilson, who, with a large suite, much pomp, and Mrs. Wilson, was paying visits to London, Paris, and Rome.

It has been well said that if Rip van Winkle had closed his eyes in 1914 and opened them in 1919 it would have been difficult for him to recognise the Europe in which he

was born. Germany was a Republic; her fleet was at the bottom of the sea, and her War Lord had passed from ignoble flight into ignominious exile; the proud realm of the Habsburgs had been broken into pieces, and Austria in her pitiful poverty was crying to her one-time friends to come and feed her starvelings; the Tsar<sup>1</sup> had been murdered and Russia was stretched from end to end on a rack of unspeakable horror; Italy was in Trieste and Greece in Smyrna; Hungary was halved, Roumania was doubled, Finland was free, Montenegro had disappeared, and Turkey had shrunk to the ghost of her former self, France was supreme on land, but Foch must demand and re-demand that never again should his fair country be open to insult and slaughter; Great Britain was supreme on the seas, but in Great Britain as everywhere else with the so-called peace, the empty places in the old homes seemed a little emptier and the silent rooms more silent, and suffering, sickness, and death were still stalking among the men whose bodies were worn by the War their souls had won.

Mr. Lloyd George, having obtained a sweeping Coalition majority,<sup>2</sup> proceeded with the formation of his Government, their names being rather chillily greeted in the press. The King would, of course, give his powerful Minister a free hand as to the men he would select for the Ministry; report ran, however, that he expected to have some voice in the selection of the First Commissioner of Works, only

<sup>1</sup> It may always be within just surmise that a swift decision might have resulted in a rescue of the Tsar and his family; but as regards this any distribution of blame would be difficult.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Asquith opined that the disintegration of the Liberal Party began with the coupon election.



to be told that the post—which brings its tenant into close relations with the Palace—had been already promised to a gentleman noted rather for his wealth and worldly wisdom than for his affability and sense of art. The incident, if true, might serve to indicate the methods of a dazzling public servant, one of whose weaker points may have been that he failed to understand what the term “service” exactly implies.

The Peace Treaty was signed at Versailles on the 28th of June, and when the news was flashed to London a notable demonstration of approval was made outside the Palace, the King and Queen appearing on the balcony to receive one of the finest ovations even in their rich experience in this respect. Still more enthusiastic were the crowds which gathered to witness, and acclaim, the Victory procession on the 19th of July, which, in a sense, closed an epoch. Marshall Foch and General Pershing rode at the head of the French and American contingents; the Belgians were greeted with a great cheer, and there was something typically British in the kindly welcome to the Serbians. In the long cortège the navy was followed by the army headed by Haig, every branch of the military forces was represented, and the defile past the King was a wholesome reminder that British sailors and soldiers, with their Allies, had ground into powder an accursed system which for half a century had threatened the peace of the world. For this perhaps men and women—and little children—had suffered and died; under all the exuberance there ran through the long summer day of rejoicing the note of pure gratitude to the heroes who had saved their countrymen, and many a mother and

wife and sister saw all the triumph and honour no less clearly because they saw them through the mist of tears.

And clear above the shouts of gladness rang the quiet message of the Sovereign—who amid monarchies overset and crumbled empires was enthroned more securely than ever before—to those who had spared nothing in their contribution to the great cause. “To the sick and wounded who cannot take part in the festival of victory, I send greeting and bid them be of good cheer, assuring them that the wounds and scars, so honourable to themselves, inspire in the hearts of their fellow countrymen the warmest feelings of gratitude and respect.”

Mr. Lloyd George was to prolong his administration for four years after the War, and before he resigned the reins of office there was required the diplomacy of a gallant soldier to prevent a fiery politician from plunging England again into war, and there was to arise an unhappy occasion which goes to suggest that the Crown’s reliance on the advice even of the most responsible Minister, should have its limitations.

“There was a period,” wrote a famous journalist, “when some men were Lords because their grandfathers and great-grandfathers had been honoured by the King, while others were Lords because their grandmothers or great-grandmothers had been dishonoured by the King.” The phrase was, of course, in delicate allusion to some of the 17th century here as in France peerages, but it would be difficult to trace any instance of Royal Patronage being so misdirected as in the clumsy batches of honours which were forced upon—no other term is adequate—the Sovereign when the

sands of the Coalition Government were beginning to run out. *Autres temps autres mœurs*, and indulgence might well be shown to really deserving "new" peers who would have honest difficulties with their aspirates and whose consorts would require careful coaching as to social amenities. But a murmur could not be repressed in 1922 when it was known that a personally estimable furniture dealer, the conduct of whose business had not been too successful for his original shareholders, was to enjoy the same rank as General Officers who had recently secured fame by leading large armies to victory. "The King", says Mr. Blackstone, "is the fountain of all honour of office and of privilege, and this in a different sense from that wherein he is styled the fountain of justice; for here he is really the parent of them. . . . The Law has entrusted the King with the sole power of conferring dignities and honours in confidence that he will bestow them upon such as deserve them." The report of the Royal Commission on Honours in 1922 cut in some degree across this grave dictum with a slashing sentence: "No honour is ever conferred except upon the advice of the Prime Minister." Of the honours purchased, or said to be purchased, from Charles I., the object of the money and where it was lodged was anyhow a matter of public knowledge, but when after the war clash of sword had finally given way to clamour of politics, the gold, put down as the price of nomination to an Honours List, was stored in vaults the key of which bore the rather dubious label "Personal Fund". The questions of honours came to a head in the June of 1922 when Sir Frederick Banbury,<sup>1</sup> in a letter to

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Banbury.



*His Majesty snapped in an aside with the Prince of Wales, during a public function.*





the *Morning Post*, asked why there should be singled out for a peerage a gentleman who, in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Income Tax, had let it be known that, in mid-war when England was pouring out blood and treasure, he had taken himself and his business, which was employing a capital of £20,000,000, to the Argentine for domicile in order to escape taxation.

So much for two out of four peerages, the announcements of which had caused gasps of public astonishment, and some rather heated discussion was to rage round a third "recommendation". Here the gentleman chosen for preference had admitted to dealings—and had admittedly been authorised for a while to carry on the dealings—with a belligerent foe. The Foreign Office, a little chillily perhaps, recognised the business transacted as being quite straightforward and within official knowledge; but to the uninformed—and especially to those of the uninformed who for four years had been domiciled in the trenches—that business savoured rather inodorously of profit rather than patriotism. The Prime Minister's fourth selection was so bizarre that, but for the intervention of the Lord Chancellor the Lords might well have been disposed to exercise the right which they enjoyed of petitioning the Crown between the publication of a peerage and the Writ of Summons. Lord Harris had let it be known that he would ask from his place in the House of Lords why a certain South African magnate had been recommended for a peerage; his question was fortified by the remark of the outgoing High Commissioner with regard to the individual under review: "I will undertake to say that no single person in the Union, white or

black, considers that either by his services or by his record he deserves this honour." Happily when Lord Harris resumed his seat, Lord Birkenhead could draw from his pocket a letter in which Sir Joseph Robinson begged to be excused from accepting the proffered award. The letter, it was understood, had been secured, not without difficulty, in the short time available before the debate, as Sir Joseph Robinson, being afflicted with deafness, was for some time unable to gather from the emissaries hurriedly despatched to him on a delicate mission, whether it was a question of increasing the amount he had already deposited or of renouncing his honour and recovering his cheque. Armed with the request, which was worded not without dignity, the Lord Chancellor spoke with entire frankness and simplicity; a wrong thing—outside his own knowledge and that of his colleagues—had been done in a wrong way, and no political considerations would induce him to palliate or condone it. A grave omission, he gravely said, had occurred which he hoped would not be repeated in that the Colonial Secretary had not been consulted before a decision had been arrived at to submit Sir Joseph Robinson's name for a peerage.

The debate was enlivened by the Duke of Northumberland's allegation that in two cases within his own knowledge a person who claimed affinity with Downing Street had offered Baronetcies at £40,000 apiece, and Knighthoods at about a quarter that price, while Lord Carson asserted that there was a regular brokerage for the procuring and obtaining of honours. The Prime Minister in the House of Commons refused to agree to the appointment of a Select

Committee to enquire into the charges which had been made but, his hand being forced by a demand over the signatures of 300 Members of Parliament for an enquiry, he announced a month later that the Government would set up a Royal Commission "to consider and advise on the procedure to be adopted in future to assist the Prime Minister in making recommendations to His Majesty of the names of persons deserving of special honour". The past was to be buried in oblivion; with the future Mr. Lloyd George felt he might have less immediate concern.

A new Government had come into office when the Royal Commission issued its report in 1923. The report was to the effect that in respect of political honours the Prime Minister should be advised by a Committee of the Privy Council, not members of the Government, who should have assured themselves that no money consideration should enter into any proposed recommendation to the King, and that if the Prime Minister were to carry forward any recommendation reported against by the Committee, the King should be informed of the adverse opinion registered. It was also recommended that an Act should be passed imposing penalties on persons promising to obtain honours in exchange for cash, and no less upon persons promising to make cash payments in exchange for honours.

The Royal Commission also urged that in the case of honours for Imperial services, the Overseas Government concerned should first be consulted, and it is an Article in the Constitution of the Irish Free State that titles and honours are not to be conferred on citizens of the State without the approval of the State's Executive Council. A

cleansing process having been thus effected, the personal character of the Royal Prerogative was enabled healthily to reassert itself, and was emphasised when the annual list of New Year's Honours was postponed at the beginning of 1929 owing to the inability of the King, through illness, to accord his personal approval.

A long smouldering revolt of the Conservatives found expression at the Carlton Club on the 19th of October, and Mr. Lloyd George, with his Cabinet, disappeared. Mr. Bonar Law, having been elected to the leadership of the Unionist Party, was then summoned to the King and appointed Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury. Ill-health, the herald of an untimely death, preventing his holding office for more than a few months and, believing that the Prime Minister must be found in the House of Commons, the King chose in his stead Mr. Stanley Baldwin with whom he had little personal acquaintance, but of whose sterling merits he was fully convinced, and who elected to double for a while Premiership with the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. The spring of 1924 found England still under the Conservative Government of Mr. Baldwin, which, however, had been defeated at the polls a few weeks earlier, and a Labour amendment to the Address in the new Parliament forced him, not unwillingly, from his seat and hoisted Mr. Ramsay MacDonald into it. The "Red Letter" crisis was, however, to destroy the Labour Government in 1924, and Mr. Baldwin, recognising some of his tactical errors in the previous Election, was once more returned to office to hold it for the period prescribed by Parliament.





*King George, with Queen Mary at his side, convalescing at Bognor during a recent illness.*





If cares of State—from which even visits to Italy and Belgium were not immune—held the King's main attention, perhaps to the detriment of health and certainly at the cost of personal enjoyment, family cares had much to interest him. Thrice in two years he was called upon to give his "Consent in Council," and each time it was a case of a member of the Royal House marrying into a "noble" English family. In 1870, when Princess Louise was betrothed to the eldest son of the Duke of Argyll, Queen Victoria seemed to think it necessary to offer some explanation for the step, her scruples perhaps being due to the fact that she had refused to allow her cousin, Princess Mary of Cambridge, to marry any other than a Prince. When in 1917 the King stripped all members of his family of their German titles and assumed the family name of Windsor,<sup>1</sup> it was obvious that he would in future view with something more than complacency marriages between his children and the offspring of great noblemen; to the sons of his father's friends, Lord Harewood and Lord Southesk, and to the daughter of Lord Strathmore, in whose veins flows blood worthy to mingle with any blood in Europe, he accorded the warmest welcome.

At the three weddings Queen Alexandra was the chief guest and as always the cynosure of every eye and the recipient of rapturous acclamations. But the days of a Queen, who will stand for all time in English history as a Queen of Beauty, were fast drawing to a close. In July 1924 she

<sup>1</sup> The Kaiser is said to have retaliated, not without some sense of humour, by ordering a command performance of "The Merry Wives of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha".

gave the party she loved best—a children's party—at Marlborough House, and London saw her no more; but London was to be plunged into a grief which was wholly genuine when on the 20th November 1925 there came the news that without lingering of pain or anxiety, King George's adored mother—with her beauty scarcely dimmed and her gentle sway over the people wholly undisputed—had passed a little way out of human sight. What was a real grief for the country was a true sorrow for the King, but in that sorrow there can have been no stab of self-reproach for, if son never had a more devoted mother, surely no mother ever had a more loyal and loving son.

In the November of 1928 the King neglected a chill caught at Sandringham, and continued for many days to work painfully when all work should have been denied him; then, but not till then, physicians and nurses were summoned in haste to his bedside, and for eight long winter weeks the King of England must lie locked in struggle with the King of Terrors himself.

The historian, examining his facts under the clear light of logic, will hereafter decide how far the all-pervading atmosphere of anxiety which ensued was due to popular reverence and affection lodged in the King himself, how far in the burst of thankfulness which found practical expression in a great Thank Offering Fund,<sup>1</sup> there was involved the whole question of the Monarchy which is at once the crown and glory of a nation and the corner stone of all that remains of European stability. There may have been, nay

<sup>1</sup> The Fund was inaugurated by a gift of £100,000 from a gentleman who played the part of Lohengrin under the pseudonym of Audax.

there surely have been, Monarchs who by personal beauty or charm, or by the tenderness of their youth, or even by their very misfortunes and frailties have made livelier appeal to popular imagination than King George V.; there are others whose memories began to fade almost before their bodies were cold. But history might be ransacked in vain to find a sovereign on whose life, and lifework, his people set a higher and truer value. To the thousands who thronged the Palace gates, to the millions who opened their journals with faltering fingers lest they should find the dread news written there, it seemed as if there was trembling in the balance that on which hung not only the happiness of England, but something of the welfare of the world. Yet as men and women watched and waited in breathless, and something like sleepless, suspense, there was underlying all the wide and deep solicitude a feeling—difficult to define but impossible to deny—that in God's good hands the issue would be no other than what was so passionately prayed for. Day by day disappointment was to succeed disappointment, but, even when from the sick chamber there came the gravest reports, there was little or no evidence of despair. The flame of hope burnt steady, even if it did not burn bright, because it was fed by an utter trust that all would be well.

And as regards the King himself it is not to peer into the arcana of a man's religion to insist that the courage—physical no less than moral—which rises from sheer faith is founded upon a rock. He need only be a superficial student of King George's public life to mark that life as based upon religion in the primary sense of the word, the binding oneself up

with God. To those whose work has touched the King's work at any point or who have rendered him personal service, and above all to those who stood by his pillow and watched the fevered body grow more and more exhausted, there may have come the conviction that, whether to live bravely or to die bravely, God's will was the will of a simple unpretending Christian. And for himself, who again and again had looked on death and had bidden farewell to many a well-loved friend, the faith of the child would reinforce the spirit of the man; there would be no fear to tread the shadowed valley, and even when the dark stream seemed to be flowing beneath his feet, there would be no shrinking back only, it may be, the remembrance:

Perchance that dreaded river  
Will be less dreadful than men think,  
The Lord may sweeten the waters  
Before we stoop to drink,  
Or if Marah *must* be Marah  
He will be beside the brink.





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